PART III

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WARFARE, COLONIALISM AND EMPIRE IN THE MODERN WORLD

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Frontier Violence in the Nineteenth-Century British Empire

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Typologies of Colonial Violence

In *The Trouble with Empire*, Antoinette Burton explores how violence accompanied the imperial project wherever it went. Arising from a perennial struggle between imperial expansionism and counter-resistance, she argues, violence emerged as an inherent feature of Britain's colonial frontiers. Although it sometimes took the form of large-scale warfare, colonial violence predominantly manifested itself as innumerable, small-scale insurrections that perpetually called forth Britain's military interventions.[1] The level of repressive violence that was required to shore up Britain's fragile rule over its extensive territories belied its own understanding of itself as a harbinger of civilisation. Rather than representing a benign civilising force, the British Empire was a 'great military machine', as Richard Gott puts it, one that over an extended period pursued the widespread exploitation of peoples, lands and resources.[2] This is not to say that ideas of civilisation exist in a state of inevitable contradiction with violence. As the precedent of the Roman Empire had demonstrated, the violence of colonisation and a belief in its civilising potential had long gone hand in hand, and this was also true of the British Empire in the nineteenth century. Framed by the beginning of the Second British Empire (with American independence in 1783) and the end of the so-called imperial century (with the onset of World War I in 1914), the 'long' nineteenth century of the British Empire witnessed a period of unparalleled territorial growth accompanied by various forms of coercion.

In this respect, the consequences of colonisation for the peoples whose territories became part of the British Empire's global map after 1783 took

1 Antoinette Burton, *The Trouble with Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
2 Richard Gott, *Britain's Empire: Resistance, Repression and Revolt* (London: Verso, 2011), p. 8.

more subtle forms besides conquest through military power. Justified on the grounds of taking British civilisation to the world, different kinds of cultural and institutional violence were imposed on colonised peoples through administrative measures that included the introduction of British law, the spread of British jurisdiction through offices of government, the systematic dismantling of Indigenous sovereignty, and the incarceration and cultural re-education of Indigenous peoples. In myriad ways, therefore, the impacts of colonial violence could be witnessed not just in military campaigns and their resultant cycles of conflict and revolt, but also in the everyday working conditions of colonised labourers, in the assumed sexual availability of colonised women, in the prohibitions that were exercised over colonised people's cultural practices, and in the forms of introduced legislation that undermined their political autonomy and social coherency.

However, while all these forms of physical and cultural violence were apparent in different degrees across the British Empire, frontier violence stands out as a particular feature of the British settler colonial world, where incoming settlers sought to displace Indigenous peoples from their homelands and turn those lands to new economic use. The economic forces that drove colonisation in Britain's slave and plantation colonies, or that underpinned the model of company rule in British India, were shaped by access to natural resources such as mineral wealth or human labour. In distinction to these forms of 'exploitative' colonisation, the principal motivator of settler colonialism in the nineteenth century was the permanent acquisition and cultivation of land. Patrick Wolfe describes this core distinction between settler colonialism and colonialism per se as being grounded, quite literally, in the inherent value of the land itself. Because settler colonies such as the Cape Colony, Australia, New Zealand and British Canada were principally established not to accrue economic benefit from labour or other extractable resources but to take possession of profitable territories from which Indigenous occupants would need to be dispelled, they were predicated on the elimination of native societies.

The 'logic of elimination' that defines settler colonialism, Wolfe stresses, not only encompassed physical violence – most characteristically in the form of frontier wars and homicide as strategies of conquest – but also entailed an array of institutional strategies through which colonial governments sought over time to render Indigenous peoples and societies 'superfluous'. These strategies included an array of programmes of 'resocialisation' and assimilation: 'breeding out' to eliminate Indigenous bloodlines; education schemes implemented by missionary and government schools that aimed to

permanently remove Indigenous children from the influence of their families and cultures; legal prohibitions to prevent Indigenous peoples from speaking their own languages or practising their own customs. Whereas other kinds of exploitative colonisation might come to an end once the value of colonised resources or labour had been extracted, settler colonialism's enduring objective of dissolving and replacing Indigenous societies ensures that it functions as an ongoing 'structure' rather than a past 'event'.[3] Lorenzo Veracini has elaborated on this structural distinctiveness of settler colonialism in terms of 'sovereign entitlement'. While some models of economic colonialism enabled the metropolitan imperial power to remain significantly politically distinct from its colonies, settler colonialism was implemented 'from within the bounds' of settler colonial governments that carried an agenda of British sovereignty to the colonial peripheries and sought to recreate a model of British civilisation in the New World.[4]

From the 1820s onwards the scope and scale of settler colonial migration around the British Empire increased exponentially with what James Belich has described as the 'settler revolution': a period of dramatic expansion in settler migration and entrepreneurialism through the early to mid nineteenth century that was made possible by new technologies in communication and travel, flourishing cross-colonial networks of trade, and burgeoning opportunities for economic investment in the colonies. The sheer pace and intensity of this settler explosion, Belich argues, had an overwhelmingly negative impact on Indigenous societies. While imperial expansion in an earlier era had remained sufficiently contained to allow Indigenous peoples to respond to colonial newcomers with strategies of resilience and adaptation, the explosive degree of settler migration that occurred from the 1820s onwards was unprecedented and devastating.[5]

The Settler Colonial Frontier: Vacillations of Conciliation and Warfare

The dramatic increase in settler migration from the 1820s set the terms for the kind of frontier conflict that would continue across the British Empire for the

3 Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology* (London: Cassell, 1999), pp. 1–3; Patrick Wolfe, 'Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native', *Journal of Genocide Research* 8.4 (2006), 387–49, at 387.

4 Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 3, 6, 16.

5 James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 9, 182.

remainder of the nineteenth century. As settler entrepreneurs sought to capitalise on expanding economic opportunities in the colonies, new frontiers spread out into territories where the presence of government remained fragile, or in some cases was yet to be established. With each new wave of settlement boom, flashpoints of violence erupted with Indigenous peoples who sought to protect their resources, communities and laws. The constant threat of Indigenous resistance to British rule prompted a range of responses from the imperial government and its colonial representatives that ranged from diplomacy and conciliation through to military and paramilitary force. As an important strategy of conciliation, the British government sought to negotiate treaties with Indigenous peoples in circumstances where their existing demographic strength and military power made diplomatic transaction the most prudent option.[6] Whether or not the British government embarked upon treaty negotiations also tended to depend upon whether it recognised Indigenous models of law and political organisation as being sufficiently equivalent to British ones to warrant diplomatic discussions.

Ultimately, however, the existence of treaties offered no guarantee against the flaring of violence on the Empire's settler frontiers; nor did treaties guard against unpredictable shifts in the fragile political landscape that led agreements of allegiance to change into conditions for warfare. In New Zealand, the Treaty of Waitangi signed in 1840 between the Crown and more than 500 Māori chiefs formed the terms on which the British government secured the exclusive right to purchase Māori lands in order to advance sovereignty claims over the territories of New Zealand. However, the Treaty had not long been in existence before competing understandings of its terms took root as a set of conflicts over land, control and sovereignty. As James Belich has analysed, this conflict came to fruition in a series of costly frontier wars that took place between the mid 1840s and the early 1870s, in which 18,000 British troops were mobilised against 60,000 Māori who fought to defend an unbroken belief in Māori sovereignty.[7]

Complex vacillations between peace negotiations and frontier warfare were also the experience on the northern and eastern frontiers of South Africa. South Africa represented the most diverse of Britain's settler frontiers, each of which raised distinct questions about the methods and consequences of colonial violence. The northern frontier of the Cape Colony, which Britain

6 Saliha Belmessous (ed.), *Empire by Treaty: Negotiating European Expansion, 1600–1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

7 James Belich, *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1986), p. 15.

inherited from the Dutch in 1795, was already marked by violent warfare between the Khoisan, the San and Dutch settlers. According to Nigel Penn, this inheritance influenced British policy in the establishment of mission stations which would become a feature of all the Cape frontiers. It also led the Dutch to vacate the Northern Cape in 1833 in the Great Trek for the southern African interior, which in turn would create a new set of problems for the British.[8] On the eastern frontier, strategies of conciliation and violence underwent complex turns over the nineteenth century, as Britain's involvement in eastward expansion entailed the intervention of its troops in Boer/Xhosa wars. For the greater part of the nineteenth century, British settlement of the Eastern Cape unfolded not as a territorial sweep through Indigenous lands but as a series of cyclical shifts between treaties and frontier wars. The resistance of the Xhosa and their highly successful strategies as guerrilla fighters created persistent problems for the British in achieving governmental control.[9] In its intensity of sustained conflict over a century, Noel Mostert has shown, the Eastern Cape frontier constitutes the most protractedly violent frontier zone in South Africa's history.[10]

At the same time, it must be recognised that the history of colonial violence is far more complex than can be encompassed by a settler colonial account of the frontier as a site of Indigenous dispersal and settler replacement. In the nineteenth century alone, colonial South Africa was shaped by shifting relationships between the Boers, the British and multiple African peoples.[11] Far from being forced from their lands, many Indigenous peoples stayed in place in significant numbers, remaining in close proximity to British settlers who sought out their labour. In the south-east, Natal Africans were actively encouraged under the 'Shepstone system' to hold land as a farming peasantry, in the expectation that an ordered model of colonial governance would produce more enduring loyalty to British rule than violent conquest.[12]

8 Nigel Penn, *The Forgotten Frontier: Colonist and Khoisan on the Cape's Northern Frontier in the 18th Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005); Penn, 'The Destruction of Hunter-Gatherer Societies on the Pastoral Frontier: The Cape and Australia Compared', in Mohamed Adhikari (ed.), *Genocide on Settler Frontiers: When Hunter-Gatherers and Commercial Stock Farmers Clash* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2014), pp. 159–84.

9 Richard Price, *Making Empire: Colonial Encounters and the Creation of Imperial Rule in Nineteenth-Century Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 3–4.

10 Noel Mostert, *Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People* (London: Pimlico, 1992). See also Ben Maclennan, *A Proper Degree of Terror: John Graham and the Cape's Eastern Frontier* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1996).

11 Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, 3rd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

12 Jeff Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone and the Forging of Natal* (Scottsville: University of Kwazulu Natal Press, 2013).

The complexity of colonialism in South Africa reminds us that the British Empire was shaped not by any one kind of frontier, but rather by a series of frontiers that worked in distinctive ways. Some colonial frontiers took the form of borders between competing polities, which jostled for power by negotiating through treaty or by competing through warfare. Other frontiers were much more permeable spaces through which colonial settlers and Indigenous groups moved in fluid capacities, and where violence arose in the intimate context of proximity, labour and economic exchange.[13]

The idea of an advance frontier that would introduce colonial order and thereby avoid the causes of open conflict between Indigenous people and settlers was tested in British Canada during the 1870s, when the dominion government sought to gain control over the vast prairie lands that stretched west from Manitoba to the Rocky Mountains. Unlike New Zealand and South Africa where frontier wars followed in the wake of short-term or thwarted treaties, the westward push of the Canadian frontier was relatively stable, planned as a process of laying down the framework of law and government before the arrival of settlers.[14] The relative peace of western Canadian settlement compared to other British settler frontiers might also be attributed to the terms that coalesced on both sides to favour a state of allegiance rather than conflict. For Indigenous nations of the western prairies, the treaties negotiated with the dominion government through the 1870s were preceded by a long history of diplomatic and military exchange with the British Crown, and so represented an extension of an existing relationship. More pressingly, by the 1870s the increasing scarcity of the bison on the prairies had come to threaten a staple aspect of Indigenous people's subsistence and economic life, and no doubt made the Crown's promise of its protection and resources appear advantageous. From the dominion government's point of view, acquiring access to Indigenous lands through diplomatic rather than forcible means was an urgent priority. Aside from the existing diplomatic links between Indigenous peoples and the British Crown in Canada, the Indigenous nations of the prairies together constituted a huge population and their combined military capacity was formidable; the possibility of conflict was both impolitic and imprudent.

13 On African people's place in the economic history of colonialism, see Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

14 Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), pp. 136–49; Sarah Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), pp. 118–27.

However, the absence of frontier wars does not mean that Canadian settlement proceeded without coercion, threat of force, or enlistment of cultural violence against Indigenous people. Following the signing of treaties through the 1870s, Indigenous peoples were managed onto circumscribed reserve lands, which became whittled down as increasing numbers of settlers migrated west to take up land for farming and cattle ranching. Those bands who refused to accept treaties were coerced into submission, and Indigenous people's promised rights as British subjects became increasingly limited under the statutory powers of control embodied in the federal Indian Act (1876) and its later amendments. As Gerald Friesen has put it, by the last decade of the nineteenth century Indigenous people were confined to a restrictive regime on reserves where they were managed as 'wards of the state', setting them upon 'a very different course' from Anglo-Canadian settler society'.[15] While resistance did not often take the form of physical violence, Indigenous people have always actively protested the Canadian government's interpretation of the treaties and its failures to protect Indigenous rights, arguing that the spirit of the treaties was to share the land's resources, not to cede Indigenous sovereignty.

As a diplomatic strategy of imperialism, then, negotiating treaties with Indigenous peoples was not necessarily a measure that either secured the sovereignty of the British Crown or granted effective authority to its representatives in colonial government. As Richard Price observes, it was in the very nature of the settler colonial frontier to be fragile and unpredictable, because, by definition, the frontier was a space 'where hegemony was constantly being negotiated and defended'.[16] This was evident in New Zealand, South Africa and Canada, where treaties were forged only to become contested or negated in future years. However, in these settler colonial sites the imperial government had at least recognised the importance of Indigenous polities to the extent that it undertook to negotiate formally for Indigenous lands.

In the Australian colonies, by contrast, no formal transactions for Indigenous lands were ever pursued by the Crown, a decision justified on the perceived grounds that Australia's Indigenous people's political, legal and agricultural practices were not sufficiently developed to warrant such negotiations, and that they therefore already came within the Crown's protection. This absence of a treaty-making tradition helped to determine how Australia's colonial frontiers became defined by repeated, episodic conflict

15 Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, p. 128. 16 Price, *Making Empire*, p. 7.

that was fought opportunistically between Indigenous and settler groups or otherwise waged by colonial governments in periodic campaigns against resistant Indigenous populations. The imperial government's failure to recognise Indigenous polities on their own terms also shaped the ways in which Australia's patterns of frontier violence were treated by colonial authorities. In New Zealand and South Africa, the failure of treaties to secure lasting peace led ultimately to military campaigns that were openly acknowledged as warfare. In Australia, however, the concept that Indigenous peoples could already be deemed subjects of the Crown meant that frontier violence was handled, at least officially, not as warfare but as a form of civil insurgency.

A much-debated response to the dilemmas of violence with and against Indigenous peoples was the concept of protection, a policy initiative of the imperial government that evolved during the 1830s in the wake of the successful campaign to abolish slavery around the British Empire. The objectives of protective policy were outlined in the 1837 Report of a House of Commons Select Committee that had been established in 1835 to consider the status of the Empire's Indigenous peoples and the question of how their rights and well-being could be reconciled with a British agenda of continuing colonisation. Much of the evidence that came before the Select Committee focused on the recent problems of frontier violence in the Cape Colony, but the devastating consequences of recent conflict with Indigenous people in Van Diemen's Land also raised the prospect that 'the whole of the native population' could be eradicated by violence.[17] The Select Committee Report argued that the best means to repress further conflict would be to proffer Indigenous people the benefits of British civilisation, including through the refuge of British law. Nowhere was this seen as being more urgent than in the Australian colonies, where in the face of settler violence and 'the contamination of the dregs of our countrymen', Indigenous people were perceived as being at risk of vanishing 'from the face of the earth'.[18]

Through the 1840s, Aboriginal protectorates operated in New Zealand and several Australian colonies as a measure that authorities hoped would encourage Indigenous people's conciliation to colonial culture, help to secure the Crown's jurisdiction on fragile frontiers, and ultimately allow the causes

17 British Parliamentary Papers, *Report from the Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements)*, no. 425 (1837), pp. 13–14. On the centrality of the Cape Colony to the Select Committee's deliberations, see Zoe Laidlaw, 'Integrating Metropolitan, Colonial and Imperial Histories: The Aborigines Select Committee 1835–37', in T. Banivanua Mar and J. Evans (eds.), *Writing Colonial Histories: Comparative Perspectives* (Melbourne: Department of History, University of Melbourne, 2002), p. 79.

18 *Report from the Select Committee on Aborigines*, pp. 10–11.

of violent conflict to give way to new regimes of assimilation and order. By the mid 1850s, however, all of the protectorates established in the Australasian colonies had been wound down. In this critical period of the mid nineteenth century, a political shift towards granting settler colonies powers of self-government saw the metropole gradually loosen its oversight over Indigenous matters, leaving colonial governments with increasingly independent scope to deal locally with the ongoing problems of frontier violence.[19]

Indigenous Resistance and State Responses

Wherever the British established white settler colonies, such as Australia, New Zealand, Rhodesia and Kenya, or expanded the territories of those acquired from other European powers, such as from the French in Canada and the Dutch in the Cape Colony, the Indigenous owners invariably made clear their resistance to British claims of sovereignty over their homelands. Acts of resistance could take non-violent forms, as was case when Indigenous peoples appealed to the Crown for recognition of their land rights.[20] Acts of violent resistance ranged from the raised spears of the Cadigal warriors shouting 'warra, warra, warra', 'go away, go away, go away', to the ships of the First Fleet as they prepared to enter Sydney Harbour in New South Wales in 1788, to the Xhosa chief who informed the British Governor of the Cape Colony in 1850 that unless his lands were returned he would mount an army against the British.[21]

While British settlers considered Indigenous land as a commodity that could be conquered, bought and sold, for the Indigenous owners it was the spiritual core of their being that defined who they were as a people. Whether or not Indigenous peoples were induced to make treaties with colonisers, as was the case in New Zealand, the Cape Colony and Canada, their connection to country remained paramount; indeed, the acceptance of treaties did not necessarily imply the ceding of lands to Indigenous peoples but the sharing of

19 Angela Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies: Self-Government and Imperial Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 152–78; Ann Curthoys and Jessie Mitchell, *Taking Liberty: Indigenous Rights and Settler Self-Government in Colonial Australia, 1830–1890* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

20 Ravi de Costa, 'Identity, Authority, and the Moral Worlds of Indigenous Petitions', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 48.3 (2006), 669–98.

21 Brian Fletcher (ed.), *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales by David Collins* (Sydney: Royal Australian Historical Society and A. H. & A. W. Reed, 1975), 2 vols, vol. 1, p. 2; Price, *Making Empire*, p. 215.

their resources. In the Australian colonies, where the British declined to conclude a treaty, the Indigenous people continued to point out that kinship, totem and country defined who they were as people. Across the settler colonial empire, Indigenous reaction to the invasion of their homelands was largely driven by their determination to force the settlers to observe protocols and treaties in relation to their country. Despite the efforts of missionaries and protectors, it was the settlers who usually broke the protocols and treaties, rather than the Indigenous landowners.[22]

Resistance largely took the form of guerrilla warfare that was common to Indigenous societies: that is, it ranged between small-scale guerrilla warfare, which typically involved payback for failure to observe protocols, and larger-scale traditional militarism that the British recognised as being parallel to its own military strategies. In the Australian colonies, Aboriginal resistance ranged from payback killings for unauthorised abduction of Aboriginal women and small-scale seasonal guerrilla-style attacks on settler farmhouses. These included raids for British rations of flour, tea and potatoes, maiming sheep and cattle and taking maize crops, all in retribution for the loss of food resources from the settler occupation of their hunting grounds.[23] In the Cape Colony, the well-armed Khoisan warriors carried out large-scale cattle raids and attacks on settler villages as well as conducted up-front battles with British soldiers. In New Zealand, Māori warriors led raids on settler villages and farmhouses, and, when under attack from a large force of British soldiers, they retreated to their *pa*, or forts, from which they repelled British assaults with singular success.[24] Before the 1850s, Indigenous peoples' superior knowledge of the terrain often placed British forces at a disadvantage, with their limited access to horses and reliance on single-loading firearms.[25] After the 1850s, however, as the British gained access to long-range repeating rifles, employed larger mounted forces and became more familiar with the terrain, they developed military strategies that were specifically designed to overcome Indigenous resistance. These included a 'scorched earth' policy used

22 For comparative discussion on historical and ongoing contemporary debates about political negotiations between Indigenous peoples and settler states, see Marcia Langton, Maureen Tehan and Lisa Palmer (eds.), *Honour among Nations: Treaties and Agreements with Indigenous People* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2004).

23 See Henry Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier: Aboriginal Resistance to the European Invasion of Australia* (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books, 1982).

24 James Belich, *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1986).

25 John Connor, *The Australian Frontier Wars 1788–1838* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2002), pp. 1–21.

against the Xhosa in the Cape Colony, 'Flying Columns' of mobile infantry deployed in New Zealand to surround Māori *pa,* burning down Xhosa and Māori villages in both colonial sites, and, on Australasian frontiers that remained beyond the reach of the law, a strategy of massacre. These frontier wars, however, were often conducted within a framework of legal exceptionalism in which the concept of legal procedure was modified to respond to Indigenous resistance. Principal among these strategies of legal exceptionalism were martial law and paramilitary policing, including use of Indigenous forces.

Martial Law

The use of martial law against subject peoples in the British Empire intensified in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, when military governors were appointed to the settler colonies. Their capacity to declare martial law empowered them effectively to suspend the ordinary rule of law. As the Colonial Office under-secretary James Stephen noted, martial law 'is but another name for the suspension of all law; It is a measure which necessity justifies, but for which the Act of Indemnity is necessary for even when necessary it is illegal'.[26] In 1867, legal commentator W. R. Finlason defined martial law as 'the final power colonial governors could impose upon dissidents under their jurisdiction who were perceived to be in an act of rebellion'. He argued that martial law not only enabled colonial governors to use military force against all kinds of insurgent subjects across the empire and to render 'immune from prosecution' those government agents who disposed of insurgents, but also denied insurgents ordinary legal rights. Indeed, he considered that martial law was a necessary measure to control the empire, and that without it the empire would collapse.[27]

Possibly the most notorious uses of martial law in the history of the British Empire until the end of the nineteenth century relate to Jamaica and India where it was used to put down large-scale uprisings with brutal efficiency. In the settler colonies, however, martial law was also used against resisting Indigenous peoples on the frontier as insurgent subjects of the colonial state. In denying Indigenous people sovereign status, the British used martial law in

26 James Stephen, Minute to Correspondence from George Grey Lt Governor of New Zealand to Gladstone, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Despatch No.109, 23 October 1846, National Archives, London, CO 325/53.

27 W. F. Finlason, *Commentaries on Martial Law with Special Reference to its Regulation and Restraint* (London: Stevens & Sons, 1867), pp. 10–12.

the settler colonies to secure fragile frontiers. As such it proved an extraordinarily flexible mechanism that British governors could use in situations of crisis to extend and consolidate the settler frontier. It could be used, for example, to subdue Indigenous resistance in frontier regions, such as Zuurveld District of the Cape Colony where it was proclaimed in 1811 to drive the Xhosa out of the district and across the Great Fish River, or the Bathurst Plains in New South Wales, where it was proclaimed for a period of four months in 1824 so that a military campaign could 'clear out' the Wiradjuri people who were resisting the settler invasion. It was also useful in securing larger territories, such as the Settled Districts in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) where it was promulgated in 1828 to contain the violent resistance of several Tasmanian Aboriginal nations. Two years later it was extended across the entire island, and when it was revoked sixteen months later in 1832, most of the Tasmanian Aborigines had been killed. Just as flexibly, it could be used in response to a perception by settlers that a treaty with Indigenous people had been abrogated. In New Zealand for instance, between 1844 and 1845 and again in 1846, martial law was invoked in specific regions of the North Island where settlers considered that Māori chiefs were abrogating the Treaty of Waitangi. British troops were despatched to bring them to justice, but in this case the chiefs outsmarted the British, who were forced to sue for peace. Martial law would again be invoked between 1868 and 1872 in the second phase of the frontier wars before the two sides reached a stalemate. Martial law could also be invoked in a very specific place for a few days, to carry out summary punishment on specific Indigenous groups. For example, in 1840 martial law was declared at a specific stretch of coastline in the colony of South Australia so that a police party could arrest two Milmenrura warriors, try them in an open court on the spot, and then hang them on the site where twenty-four passengers from the ship *Maria*, wrecked at the mouth of the Murray River a few weeks earlier, had been killed. This was the largest single killing of settlers by Indigenous people in the history of colonial Australia. In this case, martial law was used as an instrument of terror in the hope that it would deter Indigenous attacks on vulnerable settlers in the future.[28]

28 On the enlistment of martial law in these settings see Rande Kostal, *A Jurisprudence of Power: Victorian Empire and the Rule of Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Nasser Hussain, *The Jurisprudence of Emergency: Colonialism and the Rule of Law* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003); Gott, *Britain's Empire*, p. 178; Lyndall Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines: A History since 1803* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2012), pp. 108–9; Belich, *The New Zealand Wars*, pp. 64–71; Julie Evans, 'Colonialism and the Rule of Law: The Case of South Australia', in Barry S. Godfrey and Graeme Dunstall (eds.), *Crime*

The settler frontiers where martial law was invoked most often in the nineteenth century were the Cape Colony's eastern frontiers between 1811 and 1860 and the North Island of New Zealand from 1844 to 1872. In each place, several thousand British troops were deployed over many decades to assert British sovereignty. On the eastern Cape frontier of the Xhosa homelands, the colonial government invoked martial law on at least ten occasions, sometimes for years at a time, and deployed British troops to suit the shifting requirements of colonial security: it was variously used to force the Xhosa to move from one part of their homelands to another, to 'dispose' of them for allegedly breaking treaties, to coerce them into particular areas, and to force them into British re-education camps.[29] In New Zealand it appears to have been invoked on at least five occasions during the course of the frontier wars on the North Island.[30] The powers of martial law were not necessarily limited to the colonial state's capacity for military manpower. During the 1820s, for instance, the military powers available to the colonial government in Van Diemen's Land were considerably extended by adding a call to arms of the civilian population to assist in wresting the land from the Indigenous owners.[31] Martial law also conferred on other colonial officials, such as police and magistrates, the summary powers either to 'dispose' of 'insurgents' without arresting them, let alone bringing them to trial in a court of law, or to place them in detention in places such as Robben Island. As a key instrument for putting down Indigenous resistance with force, the principal purposes of martial law on the settler frontier were to secure the settler polity and to assert colonial claims to sovereignty over Indigenous lands.[32]

Paramilitary Policing

By the mid 1830s, the astonishingly violent outcomes of martial law were causing deep concern in Britain amongst humanitarian politicians who

and Empire 1840–1940 (Cullompton: Willan, 2005), pp. 57–75; Robert Foster and Amanda Nettelbeck, *Out of the Silence: South Australia's Frontier Wars in History and Memory* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2012).

29 Price, *Making Empire*, pp. 257–60, 267–90.

30 Martial law was declared in the frontier wars in New Zealand in February 1846, March 1860, March 1862, May 1864 and January 1869. However, in *The New Zealand Wars*, Belich does not directly acknowledge the declaration of martial law, April 1845.

31 Graeme Calder, 'Routing a Rebellion or Crushing a Crime Wave? Proclaiming Martial Law and a Call-to-Arms in Van Diemen's Land, 1828–1830', *Legal History* 12 (2008), 129–50, at 145.

32 Julie Evans and Tessa Fluence, 'Securing the Settler Polity: Martial Law and the Aboriginal Peoples of Van Diemen's Land', *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 15 (2013), 1–22.

considered that the role of the British Empire was to Christianise and civilise the Indigenous peoples rather than exterminate them. A key principle of the 1837 Select Committee Report was that only by bringing Indigenous people within the pale of British law could the empire both achieve peace on its colonial borders and provide justice to Indigenous people. However, this was more easily imagined than achieved on settler frontiers where Indigenous people resisted colonial authority. After the early deployment of military forces to assert Crown sovereignty, local colonial police forces were seen as the principal legal instrument for bringing law and order to Britain's settler frontiers. But whereas civil policing based on the English model of the London Metropolitan Police remained the ideal in settled towns, this was clearly ineffective on frontiers where British jurisdiction remained insecure, giving rise to a typology of paramilitary policing around the British Empire for 'intermediate' or frontier zones where Indigenous people and settlers competed for territory.[33] From the late 1830s until the end of the nineteenth century, armed and mounted paramilitary police operated across the settler colonies of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the Cape Colony to extend and protect the authority of the colonial state.[34]

In all these colonial sites, paramilitary policing became increasingly reliant upon the employment of Indigenous men, although Canada was exceptional in that it never employed dedicated Indigenous forces. Notably, an original intention of establishing 'native police' forces in the Australian colonies was not to secure colonial authority through force but to extend a 'civilising' influence by training young Indigenous warriors in the discipline of British civilisation.[35] The authorities on the settler frontier in the Cape Colony were more pragmatic. They considered that a native police force formed from defeated Indigenous peoples would be a cheap and effective way of maintaining and extending the settler frontier.[36] Over time, the latter view prevailed. By the mid nineteenth century, native police forces had become familiar across the empire as a special legal instrument that served as a cheap and effective way of suppressing Indigenous resistance.

33 Clive Emsley, 'Policing the Empire/Policing the Metropole: Some Thoughts on Models and Types', *Crime, History and Societies* 14.2 (2014), 43–54.

34 D. Anderson and D. Killingray (eds.), *Policing the Empire: Government, Authority and Control* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), p. 2.

35 For a humanitarian concept of a native police force, see Alexander Maconochie to the Editor, *Murray's Review*, 16 January 1838.

36 K. I. Watson, 'African Sepoys? The Black Police on the Eastern Cape frontier: 1835–1850', *Kleio* 28. 1(2007), 62–78, at 63–4.

The first native police forces established in the settler colonies included those formed in Queen Adelaide Province in the Cape Colony in 1836, in the Port Phillip District of New South Wales in 1837 and in New Zealand in 1841.[37] Initially recruited from particular Indigenous groups in collaboration with 'friendly chiefs' and under the supervision of British officers, the recruits were issued with Western-style uniforms and rations at government expense. While the native police in Queen Adelaide Province were initially unarmed, their counterparts in the Port Phillip District and New Zealand not only carried firearms but were also mounted on horseback. Despite these differences, however, they each operated with the same purpose: to apprehend supposed culprits, to protect the white population on the extreme limits of the settler frontier, and to use their specialist knowledge to reconcile their people to settler rule. In the Port Phillip District, those considered 'culprits' included runaway convicts from New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), but in Queen Adelaide Province and in New Zealand they were exclusively Indigenous people who engaged in livestock theft or broke other laws of the settler hegemony. The native police quickly became an integral strand in the British web of control over settler frontiers, tracking down livestock theft, operating as informers and acting as messengers between the colonial authorities and Indigenous leaders. In this role they were a second line of defence against Indigenous resistance.

By the mid 1840s, all three groups were operating on the settler frontier as paramilitary forces in suppressing Indigenous resistance. By 1850, they were vastly expanded and deployed in coercing their people to accept British sovereignty. By then, however, the settler frontier had moved on and the forces in Queen Adelaide Province and the Port Phillip District were disbanded. Most members of the force in Queen Adelaide Province promptly deserted to the leading Xhosa chief who opposed the British, allowing several thousand rounds of ammunition to fall into his hands. Some of the Port Phillip native police sought employment in subsequent iterations of the native police force and others became important leaders in their community in promoting their rights as Indigenous people. In the new colony of British Kaffraria and in New Zealand, the duties of native police included regulating the flow of Xhosa and Māori looking for work, trying to control the illicit

37 Ibid., 65; Marie Hansen Fels, *Good Men and True: The Aboriginal Police of the Port Phillip District 1837–1853* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1988), pp. 12–25; Richard S. Hill, 'Maori Police Personnel and the *Rangatiratanga* Discourse', in Barry Godfrey and Graeme Dunstall (eds.), *Crime and Empire 1840–1940* (Cullompton: Willan, 2005), pp. 174–88.

arms trade, and forcing out Xhosa and Māori squatters from so-called undesirable locations and burning down their homes. The force in New Zealand was disbanded in the mid 1880s.[38]

While these first native police forces had a temporary role in supporting the imposition of British authority, on the newly expanding frontiers of northern New South Wales and later Queensland the native police had a striking longevity as the first line of defence from their establishment in 1848 until the end of the nineteenth century. They were so successful in suppressing Aboriginal resistance that they became the prototype for the use of paramilitary violence in securing the settler frontier. The Queensland force became particularly notorious for the way that it 'dispersed' Aboriginal insurgents, over the course of half a century, without the requirement to declare martial law. From the 1870s, the force was largely deployed in 'clearing' new frontier regions of Aboriginal resistance before the settlers arrived, and was particularly effective in attacking Aboriginal encampments at night and killing the occupants. The troopers would then force the survivors onto reserves or pastoral runs and if they offered further resistance they could be sent to prison.[39] Colonial authorities were reliant on the skills of Indigenous people to secure the settler frontier, while Indigenous people themselves undoubtedly had other motivations relating to their own social and political world for becoming involved in colonial policing. In this sense, the impact of 'native policing' may have been not only coercive but also a form of Indigenous adaptation to the structural changes wrought by settler colonialism.

Conclusion

The expansion of the British Empire through the nineteenth-century age of 'explosive colonisation' could not proceed without disregarding or directly subjugating the sovereign claims of existing peoples. Despite the imperial government's objectives from the 1830s to govern the empire on the humanitarian principle that Indigenous people held shared rights as British subjects, continued colonial growth could not be achieved without ongoing physical, institutional and cultural violence. In the settler colonies in

38 On the operation and disbanding of police forces in these different jurisdictions, see Watson, 'African Sepoys?', 72–7; Fels, *Good Men and True*, pp. 237–57; Hill, 'Maori Police', 178–80.

39 Jonathan Richards, *The Secret War: A True History of Queensland's Native Police* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2008), pp. 1–4, 132–4.

particular, where increasing numbers of settlers jostled with Indigenous peoples over rights to land, the colonial project to domesticate new lands and replicate a model of British civilisation was made constantly problematic because the practical difficulties of conciliating and governing Indigenous peoples repeatedly challenged the assumption of British sovereignty.

As Wolfe has succinctly observed, in order for the settler colonial endeavour to be interrupted, 'all the native has to do is stay at home'.[40] Under conditions where Indigenous people and settlers were compelled to compete for access to the land and its resources, frontier violence became an endemic and cyclical feature of Britain's settler colonies. While it is impossible to identify frontier death tolls with accuracy, the calculations put forward by historians for different sites are suggestive of the scale and impact of frontier violence around the empire. The human cost of violence on Australia's colonial frontiers has been a contested question, but conservative estimates by historians Henry Reynolds and Richard Broome suggest that fatalities were in the range of 20,000 Indigenous people and 2,000 Europeans, or a rough ratio of 10:1. More recently, Raymond Evans has suggested that upwards of 24,000 Indigenous people died at the hands of the Queensland Native Police alone during the years of its operation. In New Zealand, historian James Cowan calculated that more than 2,000 Māori and more than 700 British lost their lives in the frontier wars that took place between 1845 and 1872. Historians have estimated that the longest and the most bitter of the serial wars on the eastern Cape frontier, the 1850–53 war, resulted in 16,000 Xhosa and 1,400 European casualties.[41]

Certainly, the expressions and intensity of frontier violence varied according to local differences, including the pace and concentration of settlement, the topography of terrain, and the question of how much settlers were dependent upon colonised labour. Yet behind these localised variations, Britain's settler frontiers all confronted the experience of Indigenous

40 Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism*, p. 1.

41 For discussion of estimates by Henry Reynolds and Richard Broome of Australian frontier fatalities see Richard Broome, 'The Statistics of Frontier Conflict', in B. Attwood and S. Foster (eds.), *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience* (Canberra: National Museum of Australia), pp. 88–98, at 88–90. For estimates of Queensland frontier fatalities see Raymond Evans, 'The Country Has Another Past: Queensland and the History Wars', in Frances Peters-Little, Ann Curthoys and John Docker (eds.), *Passionate Histories: Myth, Memory and Indigenous Australia* (Canberra: ANU e-Press, 2010), pp. 9–38, at 31. For New Zealand estimates nominated by James Cowan see 'End of the New Zealand Wars', URL: www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/new-zealand-wars/end (Ministry for Culture and Heritage). For estimates of casualties of the Eastern Cape war during the early 1850s, see James Bradford, 'Kaffir Wars', in Bradford (ed.), *International Encyclopaedia of Military History* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 714.

resistance, and colonial authorities across the empire responded with strategies of extraordinary legal force. These patterns shaped how frontier violence unfolded across the British Empire from the 1820s, and how it continued for more than a century thereafter.

Bibliographical Essay

Frontier violence has only recently become a recognised structuring theme of histories of British imperialism. Philippa Levine's excellent overview of the rise and fall of British imperialism, *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset* (London: Routledge, 2013), deals with frontier violence and Indigenous dispossession as an inevitable consequence of colonial conquest. Other recent works that give more targeted attention to the nature of the British Empire as a site of contested power struggle and Indigenous resistance are Antoinette Burton's *The Trouble with Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) and Richard Gott's *Britain's Empire: Resistance, Repression and Revolt* (London: Verso, 2011). However, although frontier violence is relatively new as a trans-imperial subject of study, it has flourished as one of the most important themes structuring regionally specific histories of the British Empire.

A wide field of scholarship draws out the specific histories of imperial conquest, Indigenous resistance and the violent culture of the frontier in Britain's colonial possessions. For Africa, these include Noel Mostert's *Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People* (New York: Knopf, 1992), Nigel Penn's *The Forgotten Frontier: Colonist & Khoisan on the Cape's Northern Frontier in the 18th Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), Richard Price's *Making Empire: Colonial Encounters and the Creation of Imperial Rule in Nineteenth-Century Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) and Jon Abbink, M. E. de Bruijn and K. van Walraven's anthology *Rethinking Resistance: Revolt and Violence in African History* (Leiden: Brill, 2003). On India, recent important works include Elizabeth Kolsky's *Colonial Justice in British India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) and Taylor Sherman's *State Violence and Punishment in India* (London: Routledge, 2010). For Australasia and the Pacific, key scholarship includes Henry Reynolds's large body of work ranging from *The Other Side of the Frontier* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1981; rpt. Penguin, 1982) to *Forgotten War* (Sydney: NewSouth Books, 2013), Bain Attwood and S. Foster's anthology *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience* (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2003), James Belich's *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1986) and Tracey Banivanua Mar's *Violence and Colonial Dialogue: The Australian-Pacific Indentured Labour Trade* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007).

Frontier violence has been valuably theorised through a number of particular frames. One of the most controversial of these is the question of whether the violence of colonial conquest in Britain's settler colonies constituted genocide. Key works exploring this question are Mohamed Adhikari's anthology *Genocide on Settler Frontiers* (New York: Berghahn, 2014) and Patrick Woolf's *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race* (London: Verso, 2016), both of which focus on the concept and comparison of genocide

across settler frontiers, Alison Palmer's comparative study *Colonial Genocide* (Adelaide: Crawford House, 2000), and two anthologies edited by Dirk Moses: *Genocide and Settler Society* (New York: Berghahn, 2004) and *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation and Subaltern Resistance in World History* (New York: Berghahn, 2008). For a critique of this approach see Philip Dwyer and Lyndall Ryan, 'Reflections on Genocide and Settler-Colonial Violence', *History Australia* 13.3 (2016), 335–50. As a counterpoint to this question, scholars have explored the significance of the legal frameworks through which frontier violence took place across Britain's Empire, and the ways in which it was justified as legitimate action by the state. Lisa Ford addresses this problem in terms of the role of legal violence in securing sovereignty in her comparative study *Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788–1836* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010). Other important works examining the exercise of legal violence in various colonial sites include Nasser Hussain's *The Jurisprudence of Emergency: Colonialism and the Rule of Law* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), Richard Hill's *Policing the Colonial Frontier*, 2 vols. (Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1986; 1989), David Dyzenhaus's 'The Puzzle of Martial Law', *University of Toronto Law Journal* 59 (2009), 1–64, and Julie Evans's 'Where Lawlessness Is Law: The Settler Colonial Frontier as a Legal Space of Violence', *Australian Feminist Law Journal* 30.1 (2009), 3–22. Frontier violence has also been importantly theorised in terms of gender. Examples of such work include Elizabeth Elbourne's 'The Sin of the Settler', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 4.3 (2003), 1–49, Jock McCulloch's chapter 'Empire and Violence, 1900–1939', in Philippa Levine (ed.), *Gender and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), ch. 10, and Angela Woollacott's 'Frontier Violence and Settler Manhood', *History Australia* 6.1 (2009), 11.1–11.15.

12

Genealogies of Modern Violence: Arendt and Imperialism in Africa, 1830–1914

BENJAMIN CLAUDE BROWER

The History of Violence, Large and Small

In this chapter I re-examine the European conquest of Africa in a critical dialogue with German philosopher Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951). This book first proposed understanding the violence of Europe's twentieth century through imperialism and the conquest of Africa, placing what had been understood as separate and unrelated episodes within a single analytical frame. Arendt thus offers a valuable perspective from which the African conquest and its *particular* histories of warfare can be thought of within a *general* history of violence. This task presents challenges. Violence reveals itself best in its local and contingent dimensions. Every assassination, riot, lynching, battle, mass killing, strike or famine carries within itself an overdetermined set of causes. The same holds true for occasions of violence occurring outside of the event, the violence of pollution, poverty, hunger and illness. The historian pulling a fine-toothed comb through the sources best grasps each instance's specific logic as well as how it is embedded in otherwise invisible economic systems and social structures. But how can historians think about relations between these phenomena across time and space in ways that do not rely on abstractions, closed systems and pre-determined patterns?

Arendt's merit reveals itself precisely in the fact that *Origins* does not present a master narrative or overarching theory of totalitarian violence, identifying precursors and tracing developments as conventional historiography might attempt. Indeed the 'origins' of the book's title misleads many readers. Arendt does not concern herself with identifying an original point from which totalitarianism developed. Moreover, by 'origins' she did not mean 'causes'. Causality implies a sequence of events, where one event can be explained by a preceding event. Arendt argues instead that the 'event

illuminates its own past, but it can never be deduced from it'.[1] (Many scholars directly inspired by Arendt fail to grasp this nuance, as I will discuss below.) Her argument depends upon identifying violence's 'elements', or the constitutive ideas and practices that 'crystallised' in the first half of the twentieth century.[2] Among the many who have been inspired by *Origins* to reread modern violence it is perhaps only the scholar Enzo Traverso who has fully grasped this specific point when he writes in his *Origins of Nazi Violence* that his goal 'is to seize upon the elements of civilizational context in which that regime existed, elements that throw light upon it and, retrospectively, can be seen to constitute its "origins"'.[3] We see here something of Walter Benjamin's better-known understanding of an event as a *constellation* of historical forces rather than their *culmination*.[4] The massive violence of the mid twentieth century then appears as something of a perfect storm, neither an aberration nor a continuation but 'one permutation among an infinite number of possible configurations, conjunctions and correspondences'.[5] This neatly departs from standard historical arguments with cause–effect questions concerning the continuity and discontinuity of violence, its long and short *durée*. Properly understood, Arendt's 'origins' helps historians separate the causes of violence from its effects,[6] while highlighting what Michel Foucault separately called genealogy, namely history's 'wavering course', its ruptures, lack of stable forms and, ultimately, its heterogeneity, even to itself.[7] This is especially important for the study of violence, with its traumas and related epistemological crises that seed the archive with aporia, fissures and gaps.

1 Arendt cited in Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 203.
2 Margaret Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 17, 28–9.
3 Enzo Traverso, *Origins of Nazi Violence*, trans. Janet Lloyd (New York: New Press, 2003), pp. 17–18.
4 Norma Claire Moruzzi, *Speaking through the Mask: Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Social Identity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), p. 63; Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), pp. 43–4; Michael Löwy, *Fire Alarm: Reading Walter Benjamin's 'On the Concept of History'*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 2005), p. 95.
5 Graeme Gilloch, *Walter Benjamin: Critical Constellations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), p. 25.
6 Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, new edn (New York: Harcourt, 1973), p. 156.
7 Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', in *The Foucault Reader*, trans. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), p. 87. See bibliographical essay for sources on the epistemological problems related to trauma.

There are, however, perils to this project. Arendt's readers have commented upon the difficult, improbable structure of the book. (*Origins* consists of three volumes: along with the second volume on imperialism is a first tome on anti-Semitism and the third volume on totalitarianism.) Moreover, Arendt's method strikes some as intuitive, even improvised.[8] Even if one dispenses with reading *Origins* as a whole and focuses only on its volume for imperialism and Africa, as I propose here, the material can be problematic. First and foremost, there is the fact that Arendt knew very little about Africans or Africa despite the centrality of this place to her analysis. Indeed she may have harboured antipathy towards the continent, especially in the period when she finished writing *Origins* and the decades after when Africans threw off European rule. Decolonisation occurred with the violence that she abhorred and a sharp critique of European norms that she held dear, as she made clear in her 1970 essay, *On Violence*. This may account for the fact that, although she condemns racism as one of the most dangerous legacies of imperialism, she has no qualms approaching colonised Africans from the same prejudicial perspective as her sources, even placing people of colour 'outside language . . . outside politics, outside reason', as her most trenchant critic has put it.[9] Moreover, apart from the most famous figures, like Cecil Rhodes, Carl Peters and Lord Cromer, she knew precious little about imperialism's agents. That many of these agents were not Europeans never seems to have entered Arendt's mind.

Finding a 'Black Arendt' in Africa

It is therefore useful to begin this chapter by situating Arendt's *Origins* with respect to African historiography, a task that is especially urgent because few have undertaken it. Africanist historians understand imperialism and colonialism very differently from Arendt. The German philosopher saw Europeans imposing themselves on closed and unchanging African societies; history proper begins in her mind only when Europeans arrive. By contrast, African studies first constituted itself as a field (at about the same time that Arendt was writing *Origins*) precisely in response to these sorts of views 'which saw

8 Richard H. King and Dan Stone, 'Introduction', in King and Stone (eds.), *Hannah Arendt and the Uses of History: Imperialism, Nation, Race, and Genocide* (New York: Berghahn, 2007), p. 13.

9 Anne Norton, 'Heart of Darkness: Africa and African Americans in the Writings of Hannah Arendt', in Bonnie Honig (ed.), *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), pp. 247–63, at 252.

Africans as the passive backdrop to the deeds of white proconsuls and missionaries'.[10] It did not take long for Africanists to dispense with these stereotypes, even writing histories of the imperial and colonial era where Europeans are largely absent. In the early 1980s eminent first-generation Africanist Roland Oliver could write confidently that 'African history throughout this period pursued paths still largely separate from those of the European colonisers . . . Even by the end of the period, only a small minority of Africans had seen a white face or had any idea that their countries were subject to foreign rule.'[11] Rather than the celebrated European 'scramble for Africa' of the textbooks, Africanists found a more important internal African scramble led by expanding African states which defined the continent's nineteenth-century history. 'Thus, some African leaders viewed Europeans as allies and partners in essentially local struggles of some antiquity: Europeans, essentially, were co-opted into *African* wars, using *African* troops.'[12]

Thus, Africanists' priorities have diverged substantially from Arendt's interests. They have explored the interdependence of Europeans and Africans and even the dependence of the colonisers on the colonised. This included various systems of indirect rule deployed by Europeans wherein colonised people ruled themselves, with the colonisers using local networks reworked to their interests. Africans also played the essential role of intermediaries and proxies of imperialism, as tax collectors, translators, schoolteachers, clerks, interpreters, even as 'violent intermediaries' as was the case for the askari forces in German East Africa studied by historian Michelle Moyd.[13] In the early case of Algeria, where France had made major commitments of treasure and blood by the 1840s and where many found genocide an attractive solution to the so-called 'Indigenous question', generals and ministers recognised that they needed Algerian labour if European settlers were to have a chance in the rough-hewn, former Ottoman province.[14] Thus nearly everywhere across colonial era Africa, the infamous command

10 Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of African Societies to 1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 13.

11 Roland Oliver, 'Introduction', in R. Oliver and G. N. Sanderson (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Africa*, vol. VI, *From 1870 to 1905* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 1.

12 Richard J. Reid, *Warfare in African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 139. Original emphasis.

13 Michelle R. Moyd, *Violent Intermediaries: African Soldiers, Conquest, and Everyday Colonialism in German East Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014).

14 Benjamin Claude Brower, *A Desert Named Peace: The Violence of France's Empire in the Algerian Sahara, 1844–1902* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 19–26.

'exterminate all the brutes' from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* had to reconcile itself to the fact that European successes depended as much upon mobilising Africa's human resources as it did on exploiting raw materials, farmlands and ports.[15]

Ultimately, Africanists have shown that colonialism and imperialism mutually transformed Africans and Europeans. In the case of European missionaries, for example, 'a protracted dialogue based in part on misrecognition, in part on shared interests, in part on alliances across the very lines that divided them', constituted social relations with Africans.[16] This went beyond social and political relations to transform understandings of something as fundamental as race. Historian Bruce Hall writes that African and European notions of race emerged in a dialogic process: 'Africans brought rich vocabularies and developed concepts about the social world in which they lived into their relationships with Europeans, just as colonial officials carried a late-nineteenth century conceptual vocabulary of race, nation, and tribe . . . it would be a big mistake not to recognize that this was a two-way process.'[17]

It might be, however, that these historiographical insights produce their own forms of blindness. Notably the violence of the European conquests can fade or even disappear from the historian's attention. Today, there are few Africanist or Middle Easternist historians in the Anglo-American world who focus on the colonial era's episodes of mass violence. Fears of neo-orientalism influence in part this reticence to focus on violence. For example, historian of Algeria James McDougall has pointed to the dangers of violence studies in an influential 2005 article that warns how this research risks reproducing colonial stereotypes. He writes, 'However many savage wars Algeria may have suffered, Algerians have not thereby been collectively brutalized into thinking with savage minds.'[18] It is hard to disagree with a statement like this, but it leads to my concern that important parts of history might be foreclosed to research if this sort of historiographical gatekeeping becomes predominant. Exceptions to this trend are Africanist scholars trained at continental European universities such as Jan-Bart Gewald, and African scholars who

15 A notable exception for the period of high imperialism is the German General von Trotha's 'Extermination Order' (1904) for the Herero. (See Bibliographical Essay for relevant sources.)

16 John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, vol. II, *The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 6.

17 Bruce S. Hall, *Race in Muslim West Africa, 1600–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 20–1.

18 James McDougall, 'Savage Wars? Codes of Violence in Algeria, 1830s–1990s', *Third World Quarterly* 26.1 (2005), 117–31, at 129.

maintain a sharpened postcolonial consciousness, like Toyin Falola, Mahmood Mamdani and Achille Mbembe.[19] For scholars of Africa working in African universities, Algeria for example, colonial violence is a mainstay of the field in spite of the censure their work faces in Europe and the United States.

What then to make of Arendt? Even as she brings Africa into the origins of European totalitarianism, and she places the question of violence at the centre of colonial-era African history, she fails to recognise the role of Africans. Ultimately the problem hinges on the fact that Arendt sees imperialism and its violence as a problem for Europeans, not for Africans. Karuna Mantena puts this in strong terms: 'Arendt's interest in imperialism is limited to how imperialism impinges upon, and indeed radically disrupts, the moral and political coordinates of Europe, and has very little to say in terms of its specific and catastrophic legacy for the ex-colonial world.'[20] While Mantena does not fully contextualise *Origins*, which was written when the world was hardly yet 'ex-colonial', she does nicely point out Arendt's inability to see non-Europeans as significant historical actors. Africans do appear in *Origins* but hardly in ways that advance our understanding of colonial violence. They play a central role in the book's sections concerning full-blown modern racism, which she argues had only punctuated European thought in the nineteenth century until imperialism made it a principle of politics and a permanent feature of social thought. Africans triggered what Arendt called the 'shattering experiences' felt by Europeans who encountered Africans, somehow shocking in their physical appearance, and race served these Europeans as an 'emergency explanation' for all of this. Arendt's understanding of 'shattering' has little to do with the actual force of African resistance, for example the victories won by the Amir 'Abd al-Qadir (d. 1883) in northern Africa or Samori Touré (d. 1900) in western Africa, who are not mentioned in *Origins*. Quite the opposite: the racial shock experienced by Europeans is associated with

19 Jan-Bart Gewald, *Herero Heroes: A Socio-Political History of the Herero of Namibia, 1890–1923* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1999); Toyin Falola, *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009); Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Achille Mbembe, 'Necropolitics', *Public Culture* 15.1 (2003), 11–40.

20 Karuna Mantena, 'Genealogies of Catastrophe: Arendt on the Logic and Legacy of Imperialism', in Seyla Benhabib (ed.), *Politics in Dark Times: Encounters with Hannah Arendt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 83–112, at 103–4.

her view that to Europeans, Africans 'were as incomprehensible as the inmates of a madhouse'.[21] Thus Arendt fails to understand that whatever shattering occurred was a result of the Europeans' own pre-existing racism towards people of colour. The sort of 'Africans' who Arendt has in mind come from the slanted sources available to her and her entirely unnuanced, uncritical reading of them. Working from accounts penned by journalists like Selwyn James's *South of the Congo* (1943), Arendt conveys a vision of the 'Dark Continent' as a primeval land inhabited by 'savages' (both terms used by Arendt without irony).[22] Thus she writes:

> Whether these [Africans] represent 'prehistoric man', the accidentally surviving specimens of the first forms of human life on earth, or whether they are the 'posthistoric' survivors of some unknown disaster which ended a civilization we do not know. They certainly appeared rather like the survivors of one great catastrophe which might have been followed by smaller disasters until catastrophic monotony seemed to be a natural condition of human life.[23]

The reader will recognise echoes between Arendt's post-apocalyptic representation of Africans and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. The novel is a key source for her, so influential that she occasionally mixes her own voice with Conrad's words, producing the sort of ventriloquism apparent in this passage above.[24] Conrad knew a good deal about Africa, but *Heart of Darkness* is a novel, not a history. Although Arendt was a sophisticated analyst of texts, she subjected Conrad's complex novel to a straight reading, using it as a source of empirical information.[25] She can then be accused of being a 'bloody racist', an accusation that writer and critic Chinua Achebe levelled in 1977 against Conrad, having himself, it would seem, also read Conrad straight.[26]

What then to do with Arendt in Africa? Certainly, one can say that Arendt's dated *Origins* fits with enormous difficulty into African studies. Thus, recent

21 Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 190. A different perspective on this comment emerges in Johannes Fabian, *Out of Our Minds: Reason and Madness in the Exploration of Central Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

22 Selwyn James, *South of the Congo* (New York: Random House, 1943).

23 Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 192.

24 The point is made by Rob Nixon, *London Calling: V. S. Naipaul, Postcolonial Mandarin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 95–6.

25 J. Hillis Miller, 'Should We Read *Heart of Darkness*?', in Paul B. Armstrong (ed.), *Heart of Darkness: A Norton Critical Edition*, 4th edn (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005), pp. 463–74. See also Nidesh Lawtoo (ed.), *Conrad's Heart of Darkness and Contemporary Thought: Revisiting the Horror with Lacoue-Labarthe* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012).

26 Chinua Achebe, 'An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*', in Armstrong (ed.), *Heart of Darkness*, pp. 336–49, at 343.

scholars who contend that Arendt merits consideration as a postcolonial thinker need to seriously account for her Eurocentrism, prejudices towards people of colour and antipathy towards decolonisation.[27] My point is not to find a place for her in African historiography but to highlight points from which a fruitful framing of questions relating to violence and Africa might occur. In this respect, if Martin Bernal was correct to look for a Black Athena to counter the racism of European 'Hellenomaniacs', and if Susan Buck-Morss showed similar vision in seeking a better understanding of Hegel in Haiti (where the deeply prejudiced philosopher found inspiration for his master–slave dialectic in the real struggles of black slaves), then I too suggest that Arendt can be critically appropriated in ways useful to students of the conquest of Africa.[28] As flawed and dated as they are, Arendt's writings provide a useful point for making sense of modern violence, revealing in particular the importance of areas outside of Europe as fertile grounds for research.

The 'Boomerang Thesis'

Most readings of *Origins* concerned with imperialism centre on what is known as the 'boomerang thesis' or what Arendt herself calls the 'boomerang effect'. Arendt's usage of this term shifts in the book, making it difficult to pinpoint her ideas accurately. And in spite of its importance to Arendt's later readers, the term 'boomerang effect' only appears four times in the 600-page book, putting the boomerang thesis on thin foundations.[29] In the most general terms, one might think of this question within Arendt's overall argument that Europe's civilising process derailed itself in imperialism's racism, rapacious expansion and lawless rule. Imperialism 'led to an almost complete break in the continuous flow of Western history as we had known it for more than two thousand years', Arendt writes, and this served as 'a preparatory stage for coming catastrophes'.[30] Practices and thoughts that developed in Africa returned to Europe in totalitarianism. Thus, scholars evoking the boomerang thesis will generally write about imperialism's

27 Pascal Grosse, 'From Colonialism to National Socialism to Postcolonialism: Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism*', *Postcolonial Studies* 9.1 (2006), 35–52; Christopher J. Lee, 'Locating Hannah Arendt within Postcolonial Studies: A Prospectus', *College Literature* 38.1 (2011), 95–114.

28 Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, 3 vols. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987); Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti and Universal History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009).

29 Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, pp. xvii, 155, 206, 223. 30 Ibid., p. 123.

'creating the conditions of possibility' for totalitarianism, or that 'imperialism had set the stage for totalitarianism'.[31] This interpretation informs the work of two researchers who have undertaken studies emblematic of how the boomerang thesis has been used to link imperialism and the Holocaust, and it points to their shortcomings. The first is French scholar Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison and his 2005 book *Coloniser, exterminer: sur la guerre et l'état colonial* (Colonise, Exterminate: On War and the Colonial State). The second is German historian Jürgen Zimmerer, who has published a series of studies since the early 2000s. Le Cour Grandmaison's book concentrates on the links between the Holocaust and France's conquest of Algeria (1830–71). This conquest is regularly upheld by historians as one of the most violent of Europe's modern global expansion. It ravaged Algerian society, which lost roughly half of its precolonial population of 3–4 million people to the direct violence of military encounters, as well as the famines, epidemics and emigration triggered by the conquest.[32] As such, it serves Le Cour Grandmaison as a case from which he will deduce the 'origins' of the Holocaust. *Coloniser, exterminer* takes as its primary sources the accounts published contemporaneous to the conquest. Hardly hidden from the public view, the violence was well known at the time. Along with those condemning it were those who celebrated it in dangerous groundbreaking theories of genocide. These included plans to 'make disappear, by means of a war of annihilation, all life deemed useless, a nuisance, or dangerous'.[33] Thus he argues that French colonialism has to be understood primarily as a project of extermination, a point announced clearly in the book's title.

Le Cour Grandmaison takes up the boomerang thesis and seems to share Arendt's understanding that colonialism diverted the trajectory of European history. Thus the 'constraints and self-restraint effective in Europe fell apart over there'.[34] Military practices forged in Algeria travelled to France in incidents such as the army's crushing of the 1848 workers' movement (known as the 'Bedouin of the metropole'), along with the laws of exception first imposed on Muslims in Algeria, and then on non-citizens and Jews in France, as well as, finally, in more diffuse ways, an early 'brutalisation' of

31 King and Stone, 'Introduction', p. 3; Margaret Canovan, 'Arendt's Theory of Totalitarianism: A Reassessment', in Dana Villa (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 25–43, at 30; Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison, *Coloniser, exterminer: sur la guerre et l'état colonial* (Paris: Fayard, 2005).

32 Kamel Kateb, *Européens, 'Indigènes,' et Juifs en Algérie (1830–1962): représentations et réalités des populations* (Paris: Institut National d'Études Démographiques, 2001).

33 Le Cour Grandmaison, *Coloniser, exterminer*, p. 128. 34 Ibid., p. 196.

European society, one that occurred well before 1914–18 when George Mosse first observed its importance. Ultimately, 'what was perpetrated in Algeria constitutes a disturbing precedent . . . and a major rupture', with new forms of violence specific to colonial contexts appearing on the European continent.[35] These transformed thinking about the nature of human life, and these in turn shifted political relations by enlarging the boundaries of state violence. In sum, Le Cour Grandmaison sees these as so many 'new "red threads" beginning in Algeria and leading to the totalitarian disasters'.[36]

Finding the same red threads preoccupies German historian Jürgen Zimmerer, who seeks the links between imperial Germany's genocide of the Herero (1904–8) in Namibia and the Nazi's brutal occupation of eastern Europe and the Holocaust. Zimmerer argues that Nazi policies in the Holocaust must be studied alongside German imperialism in Africa. Building upon a famous 1941 quote of Hitler – 'Russian territory is our India' – Zimmerer argues the Nazis looked to the short-lived projects of German imperialism (the Allies stripped Germany of its empire after 1918) as well as to the successful empires of the British and French to conceive their later plans for Europe. 'Nazi policies for the occupied areas of Poland and the Soviet Union must also be viewed as part of the global historical tradition of colonial rule', he writes.[37] The way in which a boomerang returns to Europe from Africa is considered in a number of guises, what Zimmerer calls 'transmission channels', such as the personnel who worked first in the German colonial administration and then for the Nazis. Zimmerer's most important contribution comes in response to his question, 'Where did the idea that an entire people could simply be "exterminated" come from, on what discursive conditions did it rest?'[38] He finds answers in an 'archaeology of genocide', or the common discursive formations and the archive of experiences on which the Nazis drew. This brings Michel Foucault into Zimmerer's conceptual and theoretical scaffolding, adopting the French philosopher's early 'archaeological' project of understanding the historical conditions that make certain forms of thought possible in a given moment. Archaeology thereby gives Zimmerer a way to constitute an 'origin' for Nazi violence in a conventional sense. 'European colonialism is an important historical *starting point* for the Nazis', Zimmerer writes, 'as it rests on

35 Ibid., p. 171. 36 Citing Arendt, ibid., p. 341.

37 Jürgen Zimmerer, 'The Birth of the *Ostland* out of the Spirit of Colonialism: A Postcolonial Perspective on the Nazi Policy of Conquest and Extermination', *Patterns of Prejudice* 39.2 (2005), 197–219, at 218.

38 Jürgen Zimmerer in 'Forum: The German Colonial Imagination', *German History* 27 (2008), 251–71, at 270.

fundamentally similar concepts of space and race to those at the heart of the Nazi policy of expansion and murder.'[39] Thus Africa gave 'precursors' and 'precedents' for Nazi ideology and policy.

Both Le Cour Grandmaison and Zimmerer have taken a great deal of fire. Reviewers in France attacked *Coloniser, exterminer* in shrill terms that faulted the book with a litany of errors, including, it would seem, its having reanimated controversial arguments previously used by lawyer Jacques Vergès to draw analogies between French colonialism and Nazism in his defence of Klaus Barbie at the highly divisive 1987 trial.[40] And Zimmerer's historiographically more influential body of work was subjected to negative reviews in the English-speaking academic world, as well as scepticism from many scholars.[41] Besides sending something of a chilling effect into the field of colonialism and violence studies (especially for Algerian studies in France), such reviews failed to identify what I take to be the principal problem with both authors' arguments and the boomerang thesis overall: first, it puts forth a very conventional and un-Arendtian understanding of 'origins', and, secondly, it relies on a problematic diffusionist model for its perspectives on Africa. As stated above, Arendt clearly refused the notion that totalitarianism had an originary place, a starting point on a timeline, but argued instead that it emerged from a complex process composed of many different elements. (These included 'tribal nationalism', social imperialism, secret governance, arbitrary rule by decree and the crisis of the nation state.) Arendt's rich understanding of temporality and causation disappears in the boomerang thesis's standard search for starting points. In sum, I suggest that the boomerang thesis fails to account for violence's historicity. It can be said in this respect that, like words, practices change meanings over time, ideas lose their original logic, policies disguise themselves (even *to* themselves), displacement

39 Jürgen Zimmerer, 'Colonialism and the Holocaust: Towards an Archeology of Genocide', in A. Dirk Moses (ed.), *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History* (New York: Berghahn, 2004), pp. 49–76, at 53. Emphasis added.

40 Gilbert Meynier and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, '*Coloniser Exterminer*: de vérités bonnes à dire, à l'art de la simplification idéologique', *Esprit* (December 2005), 162–77. On Barbie see Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Assassins of Memory: Essays on the Denial of the Holocaust*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

41 Robert Gerwarth and Stephan Malinowski, 'Hannah Arendt's Ghosts: Reflections on the Disputable Path from Windhoek to Auschwitz', *Central European History* 42.2 (2009), 279–300; Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, 'The Pre-history of the Holocaust? The *Sonderweg* and *Historikerstreit* Debates and the Abject Colonial Past', *Central European History* 41.3 (2008), 477–503; Thomas Kühne, 'Colonialism and the Holocaust: Continuities, Causations, and Complexities', *Journal of Genocide Research* 15.3 (2013), 339–62; Dan Stone, *Histories of the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 222–42.

transforms thought and affect, and goals must be improvised, often on the spot. Thus every act of violence, especially extreme violence like genocide, is in some way particular to itself.

Nevertheless, the boomerang might serve as an appropriate metaphor for analysis if it is precisely understood as a thrown object, rather than used generically to denote a circular relationship. This idea can be framed by a quotation slip from the *Oxford English Dictionary*: 'Boomeranging is dangerous for on-lookers, till the thrower is a perfect master of his weapon.' The danger referred to here is the fact that a boomerang does not just 'come back' from another direction or place. The path traced by this weapon is in fact counterintuitive because it can hit its target from a different direction, even in reverse to the position of the thrower. As a metaphor then, the boomerang places specific requirements upon those seeking comparative or trans-historical understanding of violence and genocide. Although it is studied 'from Sparta to Darfur', genocide is the outcome of complex processes bound to the specific force of change and constellation of elements produced in a given time, as Arendt argues.[42] This means that the outcome of this process will be different at different moments, making precise historicisation critical and fixed trans-historical concepts problematic. Here we can look to the lessons of Foucault with regard to genealogy, and his point that nothing is immutable.[43] This observation leads to my second point: in the boomerang thesis Africa figures simply as a precursor to later developments in Europe plotted along a linear course, or, more bluntly stated, Africa serves simply as a place where Europeans start doing bad things. While Arendt's prejudicial accounts of Africans are gone in the recent scholarship, so too are Africans for the most part, who figure only in abstract form as victims. The insights of African historiography regarding the dialogic nature of colonial relations do not enter into analysis. This deployment of the boomerang, focusing on beginnings and points of origin, can be contrasted with Isabel Hull's conclusions on the institutional culture of the German military during their devastating African campaigns against the Herero. While she pays little attention to Africans and African historiography, Hull provides important insights by remaining close to her European sources. She finds that German officers 'learned nothing from colonial warfare that did not confirm their

42 Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

43 Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History'.

prejudices about the correct way to fight wars'.[44] In other words, colonial Africa served only as a testing ground for practices originating elsewhere. On the same note, one might add for the French in Algeria that their own strategies and tactics, centred on punitive raids called 'razzias', probably originated not in northern Africa, despite the misleading name, but during the revolution's campaigns.[45]

Power and Violence

Arendt did not, of course, scapegoat African events for Europe's violence, and she cannot be faulted with teleology. *Origins* consists precisely of arguments that correspond to the perplexing course of a true boomerang-like violence with its strange turns and multiple pathways, along with its contingencies and its ruptures. In this final section, I briefly highlight one of these, what might be called a hyperbolic notion of power that Arendt identifies in imperial ideologies. This does not respond to all concerns that emerge from Arendt's work on imperialism – notably it does not solve the problems posed by African historiography – but it highlights the ways of rethinking violence that I previously pointed to, including the need to properly historicise and theorise the violence of Africa's conquest. The section of *Origins* that interests me opens with a comment made by Cecil Rhodes that Arendt cites as an epigraph: 'I would annex the planets if I could.'[46] Rhodes's hubristic astro-imperialism nicely frames Arendt's study of a truly *imperial* conception of power, as something inherently limitless and unbounded, and she presents the strange path by which it intersects physical violence. Normally separate politico-discursive fields and the ways that they interact with each other in a larger field of power are important to parsing this argument. Rather than locating violence in semi-autonomous, inward-looking fields, like Hull's study of the development of extremism within the German military's planning, Arendt focused her attention on how fields overflow their particular spheres, even 'colonising' neighbouring fields with their values, assumptions, protocols and concepts. It is precisely such a transposition from one field to another, Arendt argues,

44 Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 333.

45 Peter Paret, *Internal War and Pacification, 1789–1796* (Princeton: Center of International Studies, 1961); Brower, *A Desert Named Peace*, p. 22. On the razzia in Algeria, see William Gallois, *A History of Violence in the Early Algerian Colony* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), pp. 100–21.

46 Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 121.

that informs Rhodes's bizarre comment, namely how economic logic became political principle, resulting in the lawless and violent process of global expansion that was imperialism.

Like several generations of scholars, Arendt follows J. A. Hobson's *Imperialism: A Study* (1902) towards the links uniting imperialism and capitalism.[47] Unlike Hobson's Marxist readers, however, she does not see the state as the simple instrument of capitalists, even if she accepts the view that the state did capitalism's bidding. The originality of her argument in comparison to Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg and their own readings of imperialism comes from the fact that Arendt maintains clear distinctions 'between capitalism as an economic system, the bourgeoisie as a social class, and the nation state as a political formation', as philosopher Seyla Benhabib writes.[48] Moreover, Arendt historicises these distinctions, pointing to a sort of division of labour that existed prior to the imperial era, when, for example, the bourgeoisie and capitalism recognised a separate sphere for the state.[49] This changed in the imperial era when the boundaries that separated these institutions and their distinct norms collapsed. In this sense, whereas Lenin saw imperialism as the last stage of capitalism, Arendt saw it as the first stage in the political triumph of the bourgeoisie.

This triumph was marked by economic concepts and ideals making their way into the sphere of political philosophy and transforming the norms of the liberal (or liberalising) state. The never-ending economic accumulation sought by capitalism transformed itself into a never-ending accumulation of power.

> Expansion as a permanent and supreme aim of politics is the central political idea of imperialism. Since it implies neither temporary looting nor the more lasting assimilation of conquest, it is an entirely new concept in the long history of political thought and action. The reason for this surprising originality – surprising because entirely new concepts are very rare in politics – is simply that this concept is not really political at all, but has its origin in the realm of business speculation, where expansion meant the permanent broadening of industrial production and economic transactions characteristic of the nineteenth century.[50]

47 John Atkinson Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965).

48 Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996), p. 79.

49 Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 123. 50 Ibid., p. 125.

So rather than a break in the civilising process caused by soiling one's hands in overseas conquest, Arendt points to this transposition which changed the political field, and with it the foundations of the state. The 'unlimited accumulation of capital' transforms itself into the 'aimless accumulation of power' at the level of the state.[51] This resulted in bounded nation states becoming rogue imperial juggernauts, with politics, like the capitalist economy, conceived not nationally but globally.[52] The broad spectrum of norms and political values that animated liberalism – human rights (or 'the rights to have rights'), rule of law and consent of the governed are cited by Arendt – narrowed to the pursuit of profit and power.[53]

Conclusion

It is in this circuitous way that European imperialism can, even from the weak position it occupied in Africa, produce no small amount of violence. Arendt puts her emphasis on the undermining of liberal values, a point that she'll develop further in her problematic effort to distinguish violence, power and the law in *On Violence* (notions that do not easily separate themselves). But *Origins* provides rich suggestions for understanding how the *transposition* of distinct norms and values contributed to *transgression* and a generalised climate of normlessness. If many of Arendt's conclusions and assumptions prove not satisfying, the questions she poses to her sources and framing of the project are worth consideration. In this sense I see Arendt less in need of a 'historical turn', as some have proposed, than I see the importance of the history of violence making a self-reflexive theoretical turn.[54] In this case, Arendt helps historians see that general rules and 'origins' of violence are not reliably deduced from individual events, any more than individual events can be understood separately from larger processes. How they come together in fateful, contingent episodes provides historians with some of their most meaningful understandings of violence, large and small.

Bibliographical Essay

Hannah Arendt (1906–75) wrote *The Origins of Totalitarianism* in English, and the original title was *The Burden of Our Time* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1951). She later rewrote the book in her native German (Hannah Arendt, *Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft*, [Elements and Origins of Total Rule] (Munich: Piper, 2013 [1955]). Her other major works

51 Ibid., p. 137. 52 Ibid., pp. xviii, 143. 53 Ibid., p. 269.
54 King and Stone, 'Introduction', p. 6.

include *The Human Condition* (1958), *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963), *On Revolution* (1963) and *On Violence* (1970). The standard biography is Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

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Among those whom Arendt inspired to read Nazism through imperialism, Enzo Traverso's *Origins of Nazi Violence*, trans. Janet Lloyd (New York: New Press, 2003) nicely negotiates away from a diffusionist 'boomerang thesis'. The cultural links between Nazism and imperialism are explored in Jared Poley, *Decolonization in Germany: Weimar Narratives of Colonial Loss and Foreign Occupation* (Berne: Lang, 2005). Nearly all of the other major works in this field are noted in chapter 5 of Dan Stone's *Histories of the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), with the exception of Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison. The field of comparative genocide studies refers to Arendt, even if the nuances of her 'crystallisation' method are often ignored. A useful introduction to

questions of colonialism and genocide is A. Dirk Moses, 'Colonialism', in Peter Hayes and John K. Roth (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 68–80. Moses's 'Hannah Arendt, Imperialisms, and the Holocaust', in Volker Langbehn and Mohammad Salama (eds.), *German Colonialism: Race, the Holocaust, and Postwar Germany* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), offers an assessment of *Origins* that departs from the consensus. The *Journal of Genocide Research* maintains an important presence in this field.

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13

Religious Dynamics and the Politics of Violence in the Late Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Levant

HANS-LUKAS KIESER

When religion offers an incentive to perform violent acts, killing and death appear as ultimately meaningful. Violence, in these circumstances, becomes an affirmation of identity, that is, a confession of faith and belonging. When there exists, at the same time, a lack of faith in a viable political project, violence can become *the* ultimate act of self-affirmation through killings and, possibly, self-immolation. The 'Islamic State' (IS; or Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, ISIS) of the twenty-first century is a particularly blatant example of an organisation with such a connection between religion, violence and death, labelled jihad. Its credo can be condensed as 'I am, because I kill (neco, ergo sum), and even the more so if I die.' The IS drew explicitly on certain Islamic as well as modern Islamist tenets, but it also emerged as a reaction to the neo-conservative US invasion of Iraq. Whether experienced, feared or pretended, Western power had served since Napoleon's invasion of Egypt as an argument used to perpetrate intra-societal violence against non-Muslims, who were considered as agents of hostile global powers. 'Levant' designates here the core lands of the late Ottoman Empire: today's Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Israel.

The war in Syria in the 2010s, has been an extremely violent phenomenon. A civil war with various changing domestic fronts, it has become, since its beginning in 2011, the scene of an international struggle involving the main regional and global powers. Together with neighbouring Iraq, Syria at war has displayed a new and deep Sunni–Shiite divide and given room to an extremist eschatological experience of a self-declared Islamic state. Turkey, the Western powers' NATO partner, has turned to domestic authoritarianism under the dominant AKP party (the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi or Justice and Development Party, is led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan), and to a political

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Sunni Islam tinged by neo-Ottomanism. Since 2016, it teaches the virtues of jihad in its schools. Such neo-imperial confessionalism has determined AKP Turkey's active partisanship at the side of Islamist forces during the war.

Thus, the Levant and the world have become considerably different since and because of these recent violent events. Fundamental historical rethinkings have to take these core lands into account and to concede that religion has a real place and power in history, and that this was the case during the whole modern era. The modern Levant's most violent period was the last Ottoman decade (1912–22), which included the Balkan Wars, the First World War, genocide, internationalised civil wars and massive refugee issues, many of them consequences of deliberate ethno-religious cleansing. Analogous violent patterns continued to haunt the region in various guises after former violence was implicitly endorsed by the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, the diplomatic foundation of a precarious post-Ottoman order in the Middle East and the supposed solution of the Eastern Question.

This chapter concentrates on two related aspects: domestic jihad in late Ottoman and post-Ottoman times; and the more general connection between public violence, religion and eschatology. Since the late eighteenth century, public violence in the midst of society, committed along religious lines, has been a remarkable feature in the modern Levant. In the eighteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was still a giant, stretching from Anatolia and the Balkans to the South Caucasus, Iraq, greater Syria, the Arabic peninsula and North Africa. In contrast to contemporary states in or originating in Europe, or to Russia (its most feared and most hated adversary), the Ottoman Empire lost territory, and could not expand continentally or through colonies or frontiers. In religious, ethnic and linguistic terms, it was more diverse in its core lands than any other contemporary empire. Factors such as the concentration of ethno-religious diversity, a unique depth of thousands of years of written history, monotheist eschatology on the revelation of final futures in a biblical, Koranic, Sunni and Shiite Hadithic geography, and ideologies like Islamism and Zionism have made the late and post-Ottoman world a modern global hot spot of unresolved conflicts and produced a theatre of violence with global ramifications.

This chapter argues that modern coexistence among different groups is not viable without social contracts. However, stark communitarian and eschatological traditions have particularly prevailed in the modern Levant, aborting any sustained efforts at establishing such contracts being based on egalitarian relations. Even those states and movements that sidelined political Islam, like Kemalism (the founding ideology of the Republic of Turkey under Mustafa

Kemal Atatürk), could do so only for restricted periods of time, without achieving societal peace. Divisive Muslim, Christian and Jewish eschatologies provide religious visions of an ultimate future, thus adding to the sense of incommensurate existence – although the pragmatics of life call for a decent, contracted coexistence. Yet successful pragmatics depends upon viable tenets of faith in political philosophy, theology and eschatology.

The chapter starts with a general introduction, followed by sections on public violence and eschatology; the Eastern Question as interrelated with violence against Ottoman Christians; and a close focus on the Levant's most violent decade – the 1910s – followed by the Kemalist era. Kemalism performed an incomplete, temporary secular handling of politico-religious dynamics. These have again, but in a stronger sectarian and eschatological shape, come to the fore in the Levant, including in Turkey and Israel, in the early twenty-first century.

Social Contract, Prophetic Monotheism and Public Violence

Strong incentives are needed to overcome barriers of human decency, shame and inhibition in order to welcome public acts of violence and to consider them as justified patterns of human behaviour. The perception of danger, entrenched social conditions and religion can combine to offer such incentives. Publicly committed and justified violence has been a frequent occurrence in the modern Levant from the late eighteenth century to the present. Remaining largely unpunished, like the notorious lynch violence endemic in parts of the USA, it repeated itself in various shapes. Lynching cost the life of thousands of African Americans in the United States from the late eighteenth century; domestic jihad in the Levant was even more deadly, costing the life of many hundreds of thousands of non-Muslim civilians.

In question, therefore, is a public violence that is visible and involves active participation by leaders who use politico-religious arguments to justify that violence. It is generally tolerated by state authorities, and at times organised by them. Relying on a consensus regarding a threat to the state's main community, that is, the Islamic *ummah* – the seminal community of faith standing at the centre of any legitimately ruled polity, according to Koranic tradition – there is a type of pact among the public, the perpetrators and the state that incites and tacitly encourages or tolerates violence. Thus we are confronted with patterns of intra-societal or domestic (in contrast to military) violence along politico-religious lines. What are and what do these lines

mean? Why has the Levant been less domesticated by modern social contracts than other regions on earth, while premodern, hierarchical arrangements have been comparatively effective in maintaining internal social peace? Historical answers can only rudimentarily be elaborated here, but my tentative general answers are simple: the Levant is the cradle of monotheism and the focus of powerful eschatological projections. These have overruled or mitigated modern constitutional precepts that, in turn, had previously delegitimised premodern agreements.

Starting with the Ottoman Tanzimat ('rearrangement' or reform) state in 1839–76, modern states in the Levant tried, but failed, to establish a constitutional patriotism and civil religion, as related to a functioning modern social contract. They failed because the challenge was higher than elsewhere. The Ottoman Empire's premodern hierarchical fabric knew a high degree of non-territorial religious and cultural autonomy for non-Muslim religious communities, yet the establishment of modern egalitarian plurality was not facilitated by regional differentiation. In other historically diverse and regionalised polities, for example in Switzerland, geography reflected and protected recognised ethno-religious differentiation. Also, the Koran's socio-religious hierarchies and, deduced from them, the Ottoman millet system (autonomy of subordinated Christian and Jewish Ottoman communities, so-called 'millet') were obstacles to recognising equality in conditions of social plurality. Moreover, the centralist state tradition of the late Ottoman capital, emulated by most post-Ottoman rulers, did not allow for true regionalisation.

'Ottomanism', the term for egalitarian relations among the diverse populations of the empire under a constitution, enjoyed currency only among small parts of late Ottoman state elites and among non-Sunni groups who, as minoritarians, had a high interest in equality and legal security. Weak constitutionalism went hand-in-hand with the ongoing political relevance of religious boundaries and prejudices. Peace beyond conflictual religious claims and identities did not have a real chance in these circumstances. Eschatological expectations in their divisive premodern language remained resilient, and this was even more entrenched as the Levant represents the central theatre of biblical and Koranic eschatology.

Such resilience in eschatological expectations also applies to Turkey and Israel, two post-Ottoman countries that seemingly held strong secular ideologies: Kemalism and Zionism. Their predominance did not, however, last much longer than the second third of the twentieth century. Also, they were based on national salvation narratives originating in religious sources: the

'modern father of Israel', David Ben-Gurion with his Zionist reading of the Hebrew Bible on the one hand, and on the other Ziya Gökalp's messianist interpretation of Islam and Turkish ethno-history, largely adopted by Atatürk. Gökalp, the prophet of Muslim-Turkish greatness during the First World War, is the pre-eminent spiritual father of Turkish nationalism.

Ethno-religious social unrest stood at the centre of the modern West's Eastern Question. This major issue of diplomacy comprised the challenging crisis of the Ottoman sultan-caliph's realm and revealed the limit of modern Western methods to build up modern polities in the Levant. From the late eighteenth century, leading Western statesmen and observers questioned the future of a premodern, slowly reforming Islamic realm. Contradicting wishful diplomatic thinking after the Lausanne Treaty and the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, the Eastern Question was not resolved with the end of the Ottoman Empire. Concretely, it had started with struggles for independence in the Balkans (moving from Serbia and Greece to Bulgaria and finally Macedonia) and culminated in the Armenian Question and the genocide of the 1910s. It had little to do with Western conspiracy or a violence supposedly essential to an Islamic Orient but was essentially about open questions on valid rules for human society in general and the Levant in particular. Although Western technical know-how was in high demand from the eighteenth century, the example of an often brutally expanding West did not inspire faith but rather influenced many Ottomans to revert to their own premodern tenets and structures.

Repeatedly failed social peace is tantamount to a matrix of violence. The general apocalyptical mood, as framed by Islamic scholars in the late Ottoman period from the eighteenth century, went alongside the conjuring of a better imperial era and a Sunni-Orthodox social order (supposedly) to be restored from earlier centuries. Mainstream Sunni Muslims, which is the community most tied to the imperial Ottoman state, and not only extremists, believed that the perceived domestic enemies of the endangered imperial order had to be eliminated for the salvation of a state considered as symbiotic with religion (*din ü devlet*). If the authorities did not or could not act in an acute crisis, religion demanded pre-emptive and punitive public violence to be exerted *intra muros* by locally organised male mosque-goers. The 'infidel's' (*gavur*, *kafir*'s) blood was declared halal, and mass murder deemed an act of heroism and salvation. Most instances of such recurrent intra-social attacks were associated with vociferous *tekbîr*/*takbîr*, the invocation of God ('God is greatest'), and at times also with references to the sultan-caliph. Islamic

vocabulary, the rejection of European modernity, and the social envy of Christian neighbours concurred in frequent social upheavals that took the form of pogroms.

A significant example of these upheavals are the large-scale public massacres of Armenians under Sultan Abdulhamid II, particularly in 1895 (c. 100,000 killed from October to December 1895). Abdulhamid had reacted in the late 1870s against military defeat and Europe-backed reforms that, in his eyes, weakened the state. He promoted a politics of Islamic unity, a kind of Muslim nationalism or late Ottoman Islamism, rightly called pan-Islamism by contemporaries, because Abdulhamid himself emphasised its global dimension. He regarded Muslim unity as the only viable and coherent force against increasing Western influence and centrifugal tendencies within the empire. It is true, if we leave aside the devastating impact of reactionary violence, that non-Muslims benefited disproportionately from Western commercial, diplomatic, missionary, educative and philanthropic penetration of the late Ottoman world. Yet this boom was not a political conspiracy as Abudlhamid's propaganda claimed but rather resulted from the *zimmis*'[1] readiness and will to escape subalternity and participate in nineteenth-century globalisation.

Abdulhamid called, formed and empowered modern Islamist enthusiasms, but could not fully check them. Urban mob violence, organised in mosques, together with some regional violence of gangs and tribes against villages, played the main role in the 1895 massacres. Such perpetrators of unofficial domestic jihad claimed they were fighting foreign evil and were not fully controlled by the central authorities. Yet they were influenced by an empire-wide parallel structure of religious figures affiliated to the palace regime that Abdulhamid had established alongside the official administration. They all conjured up the spectre of Western and Armenian rule over eastern Asia Minor, resulting from reforms wanted by Europe and non-Sunnis of the region. Jihad was declared by local religious leaders who claimed to do so in the name of the sultan-caliph. At times, local instigators defied the sultan, accusing him of being too pliable vis-à-vis foreign intrusion and not able to assert his forefathers' exercise of power in times of Ottoman glory. This direct connection to the Islamic empire distinguishes the late Ottoman pogroms from the 1965 massacres in Indonesia where local Muslim

1 According to the sharia, *zimmi* (*dhimmi*) refers to (provisionally) protected or tolerated but politically and legally subordinated Christian and Jewish communities living within the Islamic state. However, the term 'unbeliever' (*gavur, kafir*) is largely, but theologically wrongly, applied also to zimmis among Muslims of the modern era.

perpetrators acted as instruments of the army (about a million supposed communists, many of them ethnic Chinese, were killed; the Cold War-affected USA condoned the bloodshed).

Unrest against non-Muslim minorities remained a powerful weapon and a trademark of militant Islam in the Levant. A tradition of explicit Islamist throat-cutting of civilians, declared disloyal unbelievers, runs from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century. In a few weeks in autumn 1895, tens of thousands of mostly Armenian men and youngsters were killed, on occasion by their own neighbours. A large Sunni male population organised in the local mosques of towns in central and eastern Asia Minor perpetrated these mass murders, spoliations and rapes, and was supported or vociferously backed by women. Tribes sometimes joined in the violence or spread it to rural areas. Violence was declared sacred and salutary, whence killing and robbing became a festival, even a competition. In contrast to the genocide of 1915, conversion to Islam saved many Christians from death, whereas in the First World War it saved Armenians only in particular circumstances.

Eschatology and Violence

Eschatology rooted in Ottoman history implies an imperial, state-centred (neo-)Ottoman restoration and the wish for a strong leader (*reis*) able to establish absolute power. This reis is seen in the image of a mythical world conqueror (*sahib-kırân*), in the likeness of Muhammad and the conquering sultan-caliphs. In contrast, other Muslim eschatologies, particularly since the second half of the twentieth century and influenced by the seminal Egyptian author Sayyid Qutb, anticipate and strive for the breakdown of existing states and societies in line with other violent eschatological traditions. Claiming holy scriptures and theologies or ideologies of salvation, this type of Muslim, Christian, Jewish or secular apocalypse attempts violently to enforce the eschatological reign of God, creating a divinely ordained or perfect society on Earth. Spectacular violence and ruthlessness against perceived enemies serve to confirm the group's own supposedly rightful authority and a precipitation into the exalted future. There is no stronger example of this than the IS in Iraq and Syria in the 2010s, an utterly eschatological enterprise, whose killings were choreographed as a service of worship before locals and a global internet public. Though reduced to a local public, analogous patterns were present during the massacres in 1895.

In contrast, since the eighteenth century, various actors in and from the modernising West projected eschatology into the Levant. In particular,

Protestant American missionaries believed in peace-centred (post-millennialist) and at times violent (pre-millennialist) visions that nurtured their lasting engagement on late Ottoman territory. They linked their visions to Jesus' kingdom on Earth, and initially also to the quest for 'Israel's restoration', that is, the restoration of the Jews to Palestine and to Jesus. Often acting independently of home country governments, and emphatically non-violent in their actions, they were nevertheless perceived as agents of a threatening, malevolent Western Christianity. Their unanimous support for constitutionalism reinforced reactionary forces that were convinced of a general conspiracy against Islamic rule and sovereignty. There were conflicts, most acutely in the 1830s and 1840s, between missionaries and oriental (Armenian, Greek, Arab, Assyrian) Christians, especially representatives of the millet hierarchy who feared radical changes. But these conflicts never escalated into general violence.

Missionaries and other foreigners were not generally in danger under Ottoman rule even if they were perceived as subversive forces. They had protective home countries behind them that could pressure the Ottoman government. However, it was a different situation for Ottoman non-Muslims. This is especially true for those like the Armenians, Assyrians or Yezidis, who were in friendly contact with foreigners, but not backed by another home country. Structurally perceived as devalued 'others' outside the ummah *and* as agents of foreign powers, and often socially envied, they became preferred targets of public violence throughout and beyond the late Ottoman era. This violence climaxed in the cataclysmic last Ottoman decade (1912–22). One of the main frontlines during the Ottoman First World War was interior: state-led but condoned by major parts of the society and by many perpetrators understood as a jihad, domestic violence removed and exterminated the majority of Ottoman Christians. Influenced by a political messianism called Turanism (a mix of pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism), the ruling Young Turks party, known as the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), thus brought the process of othering in the late Ottoman era to the apex of genocide.

The main instances and patterns of late Ottoman politics of Turkish-Muslim violence paid off, relatively speaking, by making the perpetrators rich in goods and power, even if they were politically insecure. This is particularly true for the massacres in 1895 and the genocide in 1915 when, besides confiscations by the state, many local Muslims enriched themselves with spoils from their Armenian neighbours. Many patterns of violence appeared, therefore, to be functional and invited analogous acts in the future.

As a rule, not only central or local authorities profited from them, but also the collaborators and bystanders behind the proactive perpetrators on the ground. Many contemporaries considered the removal and murder of the Armenians in 1915–16 an unprecedented, country-wide state crime. Yet, after the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, and because of the international prestige and attraction of Turkey's modernist national revolution, these violent policies not only remained unsanctioned by national or international prosecution but became appealing beyond the post-Ottoman world. Right-wing revisionists, especially in interwar Germany (Ottoman Turkey's ally in 1914–18), admired Turkey's diplomatic success, its radical politics, and its unashamed, transformative use of domestic violence. The victors of the First World War condoned this stance when they abandoned elementary demands of justice and, as far as minority protection was concerned, ceded to most of Turkey's claims through the Lausanne Treaty. Afterwards, Ankara easily thwarted the minority clauses.

Turkey's claims in Lausanne comprised unitary Turkish power over Asia Minor; a complete silence on the Armenian Genocide with no prosecutions and reparations; and a compulsory so-called population exchange to which a disproportionally high number of non-Muslims were submitted. Lausanne established peace for a high price that mortgaged the future. The victors of the First World War were led to believe their diplomacy to be realpolitik, yet this had the effect of corroding international politics and laying the ground for violence to come, instead of opening a new and better postwar era. Neither did the 'divide and rule' practices of the Mandatory regimes in the interwar period in former parts of the Ottoman Empire contribute to social contracts beyond religious and partisan bounds. Equality, supra-religious political thought and inclusive institutions have remained a utopian challenge as a result of the course set in Lausanne in 1923. Age-long religious distinctions and related imperial or eschatological myths continued to pervade a highly fractured human geography in which promises of apocalyptical fulfilment and of paradise for 'martyrs' live on. The ideological influence of the Cold War was limited in the Levant.

Dying while waging war during jihad is, historically speaking, the most commonly accepted form of martyrdom, that is of publicly becoming a *shahid*/*şehit* ('martyr') in Sunni and Shiite Islam. The condensed credo 'I am (a believer), because I kill (in faith), and this even the more so if I die' is reminiscent of propagandistic European First World War theologies that helped transform millions of humans into killers because superiors demanded so in the name of God and the nation. The management of violence and

death is a powerful weapon that helps produce authority and operates hegemonic relations of race, class, party, religion and empire. Life thrives, in contrast, in societies where killing is not accepted as a political option, because a social contract enables common prosperity, and the law is in force to diminish personal and party power that is ultimately in need of coercion and violence. If being killed while killing is believed to be endorsed by faith, this opens the door for abuse of faithful people by strategists of power. Also, the common consumption and/or perpetration of violence creates a compelling communion in crime that founds or re-founds the identity of the group in question, in our case a militant ummah in the 1890s or during the First World War.

This aspect, the affirmation of an active Sunni identity, is present in all anti-Alevi urban pogroms in Turkey in the second half of the twentieth century. (The large minority of Anatolian Alevis, today about a fifth of the population, accept only partly or not at all the pillars of Sunni Islam and have organised themselves outside the state-controlled mosques; Alevis have been traditionally considered infidels or heretics by conservative Sunnis since the sixteenth century.) Proud affirmation of Sunni *and* radical right-wing Turkish identity characterises perpetrators of recurrent anti-Alevi violence in Turkey. Such violence is particularly serious in the case of Kurdish Alevis (for the 1937–8 massacre in Dersim see below). Although historically different from the Alevis and less brutally persecuted, the heterodox group of Arab Alawis in Syria experienced a similar history of discrimination, before they were positively discriminated under the French Mandate and the Baath regime. These divisions have fundamentally marked the civil war in Syria in the 2010s.

Western Aggression and Domestic Jihad

The public use and consumption of violence became utterly manifest in former Arab core lands of the Ottoman Empire occupied by IS. New in this case was the global dimension of a spectacle, not only before crowds of local spectators but on the internet, framed by discourses of eschatological Wahhabism. (Wahhabism is a radical Sunni movement that emerged in the eighteenth century, aimed at restoring 'original Islam'; it became Saudi Arabia's state ideology and has largely determined the IS's Islamic tenets.) Although patterns of public violence were present in much larger dimensions during the First World War, they were never globally visible. Moreover, eschatology was less articulate, and holy scripture was not as present at the

public surface of political acts as in the case of contemporary jihadists, as well as other groups fighting (also) in the name of religion for their future in the Levant.

The domestic jihad against Ottoman non-Muslims and the expansion of modern Europe's imperial nation states were related. This situation began to emerge in the late eighteenth century as a profound and acute crisis of the Ottoman Empire, called the Eastern Question. From the mid nineteenth century, a central issue turned around postulates of supra-religious constitutional rule. Despite new departures and comparatively ground-breaking constitutional texts during the Tanzimat, for example the Reform Edict of 1856 and the first Ottoman constitution of 1876 (revised in and after 1908), egalitarian plurality remained utopian. Sultan Abdulhamid II's Islamist authoritarianism marked the opposite direction, and the CUP went even further during the last Ottoman decade.

The accession of the Ottoman Empire since the mid nineteenth century to a 'European concert' of monarchical powers could not positively influence the new Ottoman partner, because the European powers were only to a limited degree inspiring modern democratic states, honestly interested in spreading rule of law. Diversity, together with legal and real equality, posed a particularly difficult challenge, because the Ottoman realm could not be divided into democratic homelands versus imperial dominions, as in the case of modern Europe's national empires. Their homelands were ethnically and religiously relatively homogeneous, while in the mixed colonies the standards of the homelands did not count. Thus, the Levant displayed more directly the challenges and dysfunctions of human societies on the threshold of global modernity than did contemporary European states, or states originating in Europe like the USA, Canada and Australia, because these acted on a global scale. In their periphery, they could more easily disguise violent anti-egalitarian patterns that violated human rights.

Often, modern Europe obeyed premodern premises like royal rights of conquest and land grab, so that the rule of law in Europe stood in contrast to lawless frontiers, military government overseas and discrimination against Indigenous people. Lynchings in US-American culture as well as slavery and discriminatory post-slavery societies were a fundamental feature of a racial society. A combination of proletarian misery, convicts and children being transported to Australia, and a pervasive, deep-seated race and class mentality, contradicted the letter and spirit of modern human rights. Many of these phenomena can be subsumed under imperialism as well as colonial and

settler violence in the context of 'democracies' that excluded whole domestic groups from equality.

Still, there was the important experience of (relatively) democratic rule of law and freedom at home, far from colonial frontiers. This was an important distinction between the late Ottoman Empire and western Europe where a considerable number of Ottoman political refugees found asylum. In Europe after the world wars, this positive experience served as an important historical connection for innovative reconstruction after destruction, because well-known principles could be reclaimed. In short: democratic rule of law, even if limited, kept taking seriously basic human rights in core institutions, parliamentary debates and domestic public space. The late Ottoman Empire missed this even in its capital and the parliament. The same is, in general, true for post-Ottoman states. In the image of the CUP, they have largely functioned as partisan regimes in which favouritism instead of meritocracy, systemic corruption and (auto-)censure reign.

The modern, post-American and post-French Revolution era coincided with an acute and permanent Ottoman crisis in which local and geostrategic dimensions entangled as never before. International stakes entered Cairo, causing new scenes of violence during the French invasion of Egypt and of parts of greater Syria at the end of the 1790s. French aggression and repression of resistance were associated with the organisation of urban mob violence, locally claimed as jihad, against Ottoman Christians identified with a foreign power. Even without foreign intervention, but conjuring real or imaginary foreign threats, ringleaders organised such domestic jihad in other late Ottoman towns, such as Aleppo and Diyarbekir where Ziya Gökalp grew up, or in metropoles like Istanbul, Izmir and Beirut. Violence against Ottoman Christians was henceforth more than just a case of 'collateral damage' or a facet of 'normal violence', as it might appear in the case of Cairo in 1798–1800: it became built into the fabric of late Ottoman society. The Ottoman general Nasif Pasha called on Muslims in March 1800 to make jihad against Christians, as a result of which the Ottoman Copts and Syriacs of Cairo became the target of killings. They were considered members of a global body of a hostile Christianity.

Late Ottoman public violence was largely intimate, because it often targeted neighbours and even friends who were regarded as having broken a contract of submission and loyalty. When in 1850, after an anti-Christian pogrom in Aleppo, a contemporary Arab writer reported that no Muslim of the neighbourhoods 'was there who did not commit these atrocities; not even ten per cent out of one hundred', he may have slightly exaggerated, or

not.[2] In many late Ottoman crises, religious polarisation proved so strong as to blur the lines between a diversity of Ottoman and European Christians. At times, this category included groups considered local friends of Christians, such as the Alevis or the Yezidis. Stigmatised as heretic, these groups were also targeted, and more brutally excluded than Christians from interacting with the ummah.

The new dimension of late Ottoman violence went against traditional codes, transcended traditional factions, and included public violations of women. This inaugurated misogynist patterns far beyond the premodern discrimination against women, including the tradition of devalued non-Muslim female slaves (*cariye*). Similar incidents to those occurring in Cairo in 1800 described above also happened in areas far from Europe, when no part of Ottoman territory was attacked. Ottoman Christians, and on a lesser scale the much smaller group of Ottoman Jews, would be at risk of being openly targeted by violence as soon as egalitarian reforms were broached, and well-organised groups, foremost the Ottoman Armenians, fought and lobbied for them. An additional factor was social envy, related to the economic and educational successes of the zimmi. Important were feelings of revenge, instigated by leaders after diplomatic pressure or military defeats against 'Christian' (European) powers. Such resentment served as an argument in many pogroms. Both the anti-Armenian massacres that occurred in 1909 and 1895 and the genocide of 1915 took place after important instances of diplomatic support from Europe for egalitarian reforms.

An increasing number of nationals of Western countries had begun to live in late Ottoman towns close to non-Muslims, and established new networks of business, diplomacy, health and education. As a result, Levantine Christians and Jews were not only able to advance their own personal careers but also able to develop the life of their communities (millet) in terms of education, health and self-organisation. The liberal reforms of the Tanzimat, starting in 1839, and in particular the 1856 Reform Edict, made these developments possible, and with them a high degree of organised diversity. The millets, above all the Armenian Protestant and the Armenian apostolic communities, became, in a nutshell, non-territorial parliamentarian systems within the empire. Against such developments, late Ottoman public violence was generally in defence of a premodern empire, including its pre-reform

2 Feras Krimsti, 'The 1850 Uprising in Aleppo. Reconsidering the Explanatory Power of Sectarian Argumentations', in Ulrike Freitag et al. (eds.), *Urban Violence in the Middle East: Changing Cityscapes in the Transition from Empire to Nation-State* (New York: Berghahn, 2015), p. 145. Cf. Nora Lafi, 'The 1800 Insurrection in Cairo', in Freitag et al. (eds.), *Urban Violence*, pp. 40–5.

hierarchical social order. A jihad against its perceived domestic enemies and looting were allowed by a widespread vulgar understanding of sharia, in which hate speech was combined with the discourse of a sultanate-caliphate in urgent need of militant defence against traitors and unbelievers among neighbours within the empire.

Late Ottoman, predominantly Sunni public violence thus appears in global perspective as a reaction of those who had lost power but who still possessed considerable regional means of force against potential domestic opponents. Mob violence was an advantage in which terror compensated for weakness on other levels. Yet these forces made regional and central rulers susceptible to blackmail by local factions, because local factions used violence at times single-handedly and threatened minorities or even foreign representatives, thus creating diplomatic conflicts. The authorities were responsible for law, order and security, particularly to protect foreigners. In critical times, as in 1895 and during the comparable (though more limited) massacres of Armenians in Adana in 1909, they concentrated upon both protecting foreigners and offering local perpetrators the freedom to kill, loot and rape local Christians during limited time slots.

Forced conversions, including painful and risky ad hoc circumcisions of men, are another poignant chapter of a modern Middle Eastern history of violence. They were acts of humiliation and public displays of the supposed superiority of Islam. Not only mostly provincial Christians but also Alevis and Yezidis were targeted by coerced conversion in critical times. The Yezidis were also subject to a related military campaign in the 1890s. The genocide of Yezidis in 2014–17 conducted by ISIS, including forced conversions, is in line with Ottoman campaigns and, above all, age-old stigmatising discourse. Islamist discourse, social envy and impunity for murder and robbery conditioned the people to accept late Ottoman massacres as well as the genocide of 1915, including large-scale spoliation. The state tolerated, promoted or organised such violence while it empowered Muslims and granted them preferential treatment. Many Ottoman Muslim refugees (*muhacir*) from the Balkans and the Caucasus were settled on the land and in houses of Ottoman Christians. Public discourse justified such preferential treatment as a compensation for imperial losses and for a supposed supreme Muslim suffering in the modern age. These policies and the sense of Muslim victimhood derived from a sweeping interpretation of the modern age: evil, anti-Muslim European designs had started in the eighteenth century and had peaked during the First Balkan War, while the Western press and scholarship

suppressed positive contributions to human civilisation by Muslims and Turks.

The Most Violent Decade (1912–1922) and Kemalism

A decisive new factor for the politics of domestic violence under the CUP in the 1910s was the interplay of domestic jihad with a new, radical Turkism that the dictatorial CUP leadership adopted on the eve of and during the First World War. It complemented Abdulhamid's Islamism (Hamidism), making a radical Turkish Islamism or Muslim Turkism that based modern national identity on Islam and Turkishness. The CUP regarded Hamidism as too reactionary and therefore unfit for the modern exercise of imperial power. Turkism on the other hand aimed at Turkish salvation by embracing Turkish roots and expansion into a huge Central Asian motherland called Turan. It claimed to make Asia Minor a sovereign Turkish homeland led and possessed by Muslim-Turks alone, not to be shared with other groups rooted in the same soil. Whereas Islamism warranted support in the provinces, Turkism provided the CUP with the backing of large parts of Istanbul's intelligentsia and students, as well as power on the streets of the capital.

Gökalp was the main prophet of an Islamist Turkism, while his friend Mehmed Talaat (Pasha) was Istanbul's main political leader in the 1910s. In contrast to their ideology and politics of war and violence after 1913, the horizon of democratic equality, multicultural peace and pragmatic collaboration had emerged as a more hopeful goal during the Ottoman spring after the Young Turk Revolution of July 1908. However, just a few years later, this vision turned to bloody dystopia. Political infighting and Talaat's disillusion with parliamentarism, continued territorial losses and Europe's unfriendly diplomacy, all played a role in the CUP's turn to war and violence. (The European Powers did not actively maintain Ottoman integrity despite the promises of the Berlin Treaty of 1878 that had determined the parameters of the late Ottoman Empire.) Talaat and his friends then hastily abandoned the constitutional ideals of 1908 that had valorised hitherto discriminated groups and made the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (the main Armenian party) their political ally.

The dynamics of the Ottoman descent into violence started with the Balkan Wars that coincided with the re-emergence of the conflict about the reforms for eastern Asia Minor in 1912–14, based on the Berlin Treaty. The political atmosphere made it easy for detractors of internationally monitored

reforms to denounce egalitarian reforms as an anti-Ottoman and anti-Sunni plot. Ottoman war dynamics became a factor for larger Europe's cataclysm in July 1914. It culminated in the genocide of 1915–16 and ended provisionally when the war for Asia Minor was decided in 1922. Seen from Istanbul, Italy's invasion of Ottoman Libya in the autumn of 1911 had already polarised the political situation in accordance with the old lines of Europe versus the Orient, and Christians against Muslims. The First Balkan War in autumn 1912 entrenched these lines even more. Heavy losses in this war made the CUP leadership resentful against Christians in general, both domestically and internationally. Yet, importantly, Talaat's acceptance of war and domestic polarisation had been his choice on the eve of the First Balkan War in September and early October 1912. The weak performance of the liberal-conservative cabinet in power during the war played into the hands of the future putschists.

In 1913, the CUP installed the first single-party regime in the twentieth century. Domestically at a nadir after an anti-CUP coup had temporarily succeeded in July 1912, they embraced the hazardous politics of war and a putsch. They managed to establish their regime after a coup in January 1913. In 1914, they started to combine the politics of imperial restoration and expansion with comprehensive demographic engineering and a right-wing-revolutionary transformation of society. Establishing a Muslim war ummah, the CUP secured a safe support base for its radical regime. Unprecedented in Levantine history, public domestic violence, organised or instigated by authorities, killed over a million Armenians and Assyrians in 1915–16. The events included serial torture, and mass executions in or outside towns (the mass killings took place mostly outside of towns, in contrast to 1895), the serial rape of tens of thousands of Christian women and children, the mass starvation of hundreds of thousands of deported Armenians, and slave markets of children and women in many towns in Mesopotamia.

In 1922, the results of an extremely violent decade favoured radical Turkish nationalism. This brand of Turkish nationalism is called Kemalism after the former CUP general, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who became the decisive leader after 1918. Gökalpian Turkism then turned from Talaat to the new leader and the Ankara-based Republic, and rapidly dominated after 1923. It repudiated political Islam, and instead emphasised Gökalp's ethno-nationalist tenets. However, Kemal's decisive War of (Turkish-Muslim) Independence in 1919–22 was fought together with Sunni Kurds in the name of Islam. The early Kemalist movement cooperated with late Ottoman political Islam to win this war for Asia Minor, before rejecting it in favour of a radical and

exclusive Turkism. The brusque rejection of political Islam won Turkey the sympathy of the West, and to a lesser degree also of Soviet Russia, which had already been a crucial ally during the war for Asia Minor. Yet the break suppressed any serious soul-searching regarding previous jihad and genocide. Decades later, this unclarified history facilitated the return of Islamism. Attempts at making a break with the experience of massive domestic violence, including trials against perpetrators and a few attempts at public ostracism, failed within two years after 1918.

Those responsible for the anti-Christian violence in the last decade of the Ottoman Empire remained therefore largely in power at all levels of the administration in post-Ottoman Turkey, except at the head of the state itself. The perpetrators, their successors and their spokesmen in the new capital Ankara continued over decades to rationalise the use of violence by the CUP as mainly self-defence, in line with CUP propaganda. Late Ottoman patterns of violence and their public arguments remained formative in the Republic of Turkey, even though the context had changed. There were aspects of the Armenian genocide in the military campaign of 1937–8 that killed more than 10,000 civilians in the Alevi Kurdish region of Dersim and transferred surviving children from one group to the other. Similar events like the 1895–6 anti-Armenian pogroms, though not of the same scale, occurred in the second half of the twentieth century against Alevis, who were depicted as heretics and communists.

Talaat and most CUP Central Committee members understood the First World War as a jihad for the sake of Turkey's power.[3] For them, the violence perpetrated between 1911 and 1922 was in defence of the Islamic empire and the state and for a last sovereign resort for Turkish-speaking Muslims in Asia Minor. It was also expansionist, combining a seemingly constitutional parliamentary rule with an aggressive party dictatorship inspired by Gökalp's pan-Turkism. Gökalp's pan-Turkism had been built on Islam's supposed supremacy. Islam-sceptical Kemalism attempted to found its authority on a pseudo-scientific 'Turkish History Thesis' that pretended that ethno-historical Turkdom was the cradle of human language and civilisation and had been present in Anatolia since prehistoric times. The socio-political conclusion was similar: Turkdom was supreme, and non-Turks, a fortiori non-Muslims, had no claim on and no equal rights in Anatolia.

3 Mustafa Aksakal, 'The Ottoman Proclamation of Jihad', in Erik-Jan Zürcher (ed.), *Jihad and Islam in World War I: Studies on the Ottoman Jihad on the Centenary of Snouck Hurgronje's 'Holy War Made in Germany'* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2016), pp. 53–69, at p. 64.

Despite defeat in the First World War, the main players saw the violent removal of Christians as a crucial achievement and the Treaty of Lausanne as a diplomatic triumph, at least in respect to the genocide. Against the backdrop of such successful violence, the CUP lastingly prefigured the domestic patterns and behaviour of various post-Ottoman power players, namely the Kemalist single-party regime and the Arab Baath parties. Also, the reverse conversion of AKP luminaries in Ankara from fresh reform-oriented democrats in the 2000s to war-prone, national-Islamist authoritarians under Erdoğan in the 2010s displays a political behaviour that is familiar from the early 1910s.

This perpetuation of patterns is true, although Kemalism abstained from imperial ambitions and repressed political Islam until the end of the 1990s. It did this, however, only insofar as it feared Islamic competition in the politico-cultural arena, not when it conformed to common concepts of the enemy. Islamism developed in the second half of the twentieth century into the hegemonic ideology in the Levant (and the Islamic world in general), when the superficially secular post-Ottoman regimes began to show major shortcomings. Kemalist actors reared up forcefully a last time in the military putsch of September 1980, when violence and mass imprisonments targeted above all left-wing and Kurdish militants. This intervention did not stop the return of political Islam in Turkey. On the contrary, a semi-official Turkish-Islamic synthesis resulted, and compulsory Islamic instruction was introduced in public schools after the coup.

As a comparatively strong and messianic ideology based both on Gökalp's Turkism and a cult of Atatürk, Kemalism had inspired a state whose structure was, however, no less at risk than that of other post-Ottoman states, because it too lacked a true social contract. Turkey was caught up by Islamism comparatively late, after its role as a Middle Eastern cornerstone of NATO in the Cold War had expired and a promising road to real democracy had been usurped by authoritarianism. The 'religious turn', or the emergence of religion on the political surface, was a global phenomenon of the second half of the twentieth century. Besides Islam in the Middle East, we also saw the rise of the religious right in the United States, a religious shift in post-1967 Israel, and an explicit eschatological reading of Zionism by Jews and Christians. In Europe, and partly also in Turkey, this religious turn remained long hidden in the shadow of ideological Cold War conflicts.

It is true that Turkey's re-intensified interaction with the European Union, which had condemned the 1980 putsch and recognised the Armenian genocide, opened new windows of opportunity and access to new instruments of

conflict resolution from 2000 on. This led to a more consensual, violence-preventing policy-building, including steps towards a new constitution based on universal standards; an opening towards the Kurds and negotiations with Kurdish leaders; and, importantly, some steps towards a coming to terms with mass violence in modern Turkish-Muslim history that has long been denied by the Turkish state. But these constructive developments were interrupted and destroyed in the context of an anti-Kurdish war policy that started domestically in the south-east of Turkey in July 2015 and has continued since August 2016 in northern Syria.

Conclusion

From a population of over 15 million, Asia Minor lost more than 6 million inhabitants in 1914–23, two-thirds of them Christians, and half of them killed. The organisers of the latter's removal gave actors of domestic jihad ample opportunity to kill, rob and rape. Of about 4 million deaths in the Ottoman First World War, less than 800,000 were soldiers. Domestic death and killing caused far more fatalities than military violence at the fronts. Rebellions or domestic war in the inter-war period continued to kill tens of thousands in the former Ottoman world, the majority of them Kurdish civilians.

The 1878 Berlin Treaty was replaced in 1923 by the even more fundamental Lausanne Treaty, which is still valid today in its main points, but, in real terms, the post-Ottoman world has never come to rest. After the Second World War, Israel's wars took centre stage. Since the late 1970s, interstate and domestic wars such as the Iran-Iraq war, the anti-Kurdish Anfal campaign, the Lebanese civil war, the Kurdish guerrilla wars in Turkey, the Persian Gulf war in 1991, the US-invasion and its long aftermath in Iraq, the civil war in Syria and the war in Yemen have killed millions of people and forcibly removed many more. In contrast to the Cold War-related mass violence in South-East Asia, unrest has increased in the Levant since the late twentieth century. In both areas, it has been openly marked by ethno-religious references. Jihad played a major role.

Since 1945, there has been an incomparably higher death toll through war and violence in the post-Ottoman world than in continental Europe, including in war-torn former Yugoslavia (Europe's own post-Ottoman region). Unsettled issues and a lack of social contracts have kept this vast expanse of human geography in a state of violent unrest since the cataclysm of the 1910s. Jihad – domestically even more than towards the exterior – is a crucial aspect

of this violence. Kemalism failed in overcoming Islamism, as it pretended, but acted like an ersatz Islam, perpetuating former patterns of imperially biased, leader-centred politics that favoured (in this case, urban) Turkish-speaking Sunnis.

Recent research on violence, inspired by the social sciences, has emphasised social, political, economic and spatial factors in explanations of violence and helped deconstruct monolithic ideas on polarisation. Yet it has long failed to address certain significant elements. The genocide of 1915, a topic dismissed by Western academia until the end of the twentieth century, is the most striking among them, and its long-term consequences still wait to be explored. Religion is another. Twentieth-century scholarship in general missed analysing and measuring the resilience and power of prophetic religion. Historical developments in the Levant went against the grain of disciplines rooted in Western Enlightenment. Sectarian resurgence and violence since the 1960s, in particular the civil war in Lebanon and the Islamic revolution in Iran, have taken Cold War-focused Western intellectuals and strategists by surprise.

Because ethno-religious differences accompany categorical eschatological claims, social contracts resulting from a pragmatic negotiation, based on equality, are almost impossible in the Levant. This is manifest in Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Israel-Palestine and the whole former Ottoman world. Myths of power, identity and hierarchies hold sway in politico-religious discourses and practices. Research must expose them and their resilience. Among the strongest imperial myths are those such as Islamist, (pan-)Turkist and neo-Ottomanist that refer to the Ottoman sultanate-caliphate, which is the most durable Islamic empire in history. Among the strongest religious myths is apocalyptic Wahhabism, whose birth goes back to the eighteenth century, when it reacted against an Ottoman capital seen as weak, corrupt, and under European influence. Referring to the Koranic society of the seventh century and holy scriptures, it has developed a violent global apocalypticism over recent decades. Due to the Islamic revolution of 1979 in Iran, Shiism also strongly displays eschatology on the surface of its political discourse. The historico-religious lines dividing Shiism from Wahhabite or neo-Ottomanist Islamisms, however, are deep and have determined alliances on the battlefields in Syria in the 2010s.

Current Sunni and Shiite apocalypticisms cannot be understood without considering interaction with the West. Not only do they react against American intervention and presence in the Middle East, but they are also influenced by products such as the films, books, pamphlets and games of

a late twentieth-century industry of apocalypticism in the USA. This industry sold and sells pre-millennialist representations of violence along religious lines. Militant Islam in the spirit of ISIS claims to hasten by war Mahdi-Messiah Jesus' second coming and his establishment of a global Muslim rule, and this is a pattern of Sunni eschatology of which many Christians are not aware. Although the 'millennium' or Kingdom of Jesus cannot be forced by violence or conquest in most Christian traditions, sales-oriented pre-millennialist fantasy made its arrival a spectacle of unavoidable mass killing. Shiite eschatology displays faith in its own militancy and in Jesus' coming at the side of the Mahdi, the revealed hidden Imam. Though more flexible in general, Shiite Mahdism in the militant form of Iran's Islamic Revolution mirrors Sunni eschatology in its emphasis on global Muslim conquest and superiority, and marginalises Sufi or liberal interpretations.

Taking seriously the political weight of legacies, but refusing essentialism, this chapter has explored patterns of violence, particularly domestic jihad, rooted in ethno-religious inequality and conflicting eschatology. Often controlled by or going in tandem with state power, such patterns exist to this day in the post-Ottoman Levant. They encompass demographic engineering, genocide, annihilating urban warfare, serial suicide attacks, pogroms, mediatised atrocities, and war in the name of religion and eschatology. This chapter has understood the persistence of violence and brutalisation of societies as a lack of effective social contracts. It has dealt with the failure of attempts to achieve them in the late Ottoman and post-Ottoman Levant. It has argued that negotiating them is nowhere more demanding than in a geography where the historical claims of all revealed monotheisms meet, and religious mobilisation is rewarded. Given the force of diverging eschatologies claiming supremacy for their groups and projecting the future in absolute terms, it is hard to see an end to polarisation in the present Levant.

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14

Violence and the First World War

BRUNO CABANES

Although a century has passed since its outbreak, the First World War retains much of its mystery. Historians have long debated its origins. But now it is the very violence of the conflict that focuses many of their discussions: its intensity; its specificity, if we compare the First World War to the wars that preceded it; or even the way in which combatants and civilians succeeded in holding on for so long, in almost unbearable living conditions. A mystery, then, that the historian François Furet has summarised as follows: 'Today's teenagers cannot even conceive of the national passions that led the peoples of Europe to kill each other for four full years.'[1]

Violence on the battlefields, violence against civilians, the violence of weapons and of words: the first global conflict marks a major rupture in the history of modern warfare, precisely because it abolished any distinction between combatants and non-combatants. To understand the intensity of total war, military historians first had to move away from a 'history from above', from the perspective of statesmen, strategists and generals, and instead study how the violence of war impacted bodies and minds. This first historiographical revolution occurred in the 1970s, when John Keegan published his groundbreaking book *The Face of Battle*.[2] More recently, military historians have explored the impact of the war on civilian populations (the Armenian genocide; the bombing of cities; blockades and famine; the displacement of refugees; sexual violence . . .) and reflected on the way in which stirring discourse allowed societies at war to endure the conflict. Indeed, the violence of the First World War was enacted not only by nation states, armies, police forces and administrations, but also by individuals, or groups

1 François Furet, *Le passé d'une illusion: essai sur l'idée communiste au XXème siècle* (Paris: Robert Laffont/Calmann Lévy, 1995), p. 35; trans. Deborah Furet as *The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 20.

2 John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (New York: Penguin, 1976).

of individuals, acting spontaneously or under constraint in support of their homeland. It consisted not only of violent acts, but also of violent images and words. Studying the links between the discourse and practice of violence is one of the important aspects of the history of war cultures, which has been developed by historians since the late 1990s.[3]

Last but not least, thinking about the violence of the First World War means interrogating its place in the history of modern warfare: the emergence of industrial warfare in the second half of the nineteenth century; the thresholds of violence breached one by one in 1914–18; and finally, how the violence of war was transformed (far more than it was dissipated) in the transition from war towards peace. In other words, it requires redefining what we commonly call 'wartime': the individual and collective initiation into violence; thresholds of violence and the way they are perceived; how forms of violence mutate; the rhythms and modalities of demobilisation; and finally, the future of war violence after the official cessation of hostilities.

Towards Total War

From its very beginnings, the First World War was perceived as different from previous conflicts. In the spring of 1915, French soldiers used the expression 'Grande Guerre' for the first time in their correspondence; it reveals how the conflict pushed violence to its paroxysm and human endurance to its limits. In the summer of 1914, it only took a few days – a few weeks at most – for Europe to discover the extreme violence of the conflict that had just broken out.

The war of movement that lasted four months on the Western Front (August to November 1914) and almost a year on the Eastern Front was particularly deadly: 300,000 French soldiers were killed in 1914, which is to say an average of 60,000 dead each month and more than 2,000 each day. On the single day of 22 August 1914, the French army lost 27,000 combatants – as many soldiers as were killed during the Algerian war from 1954 to 1962.[4] As for the German army, September 1914 was one of the three deadliest months of the war: 71,481 were killed or declared missing, only a few less than in July and September 1916. On the Western Front, the Battle of the Frontiers, at the

3 Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14–18: retrouver la guerre* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000); trans. Catherine Temerson as *14–18: Understanding the Great War* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2003).

4 Jean-Michel Steg, *Le jour le plus meurtrier de l'histoire de France, 22 août* 1914 (Paris: Fayard, 2014).

end of August 1914, marked a turning point which was underestimated by military historians for a long time.

The rather imprecise monthly tallies of casualties do not allow us to appreciate fully the descent into violence as it was experienced by combatants. In their war journals, soldiers narrate a series of initiations, which progressively led them to discover the reality of war violence: destroyed houses; cannonades heard for the first time; the first wounded; the first dead bodies (of men or of horses); the first experience of combat. Though Europe quickly descended into modern warfare, the initiation of individuals to violence happened step by step – with the decisive threshold of the 'baptism of fire'. For Ivan Cassagnau, an artilleryman from south-western France, the tipping point was on 19 August 1914, a day when two officers, eight NCOs and 117 of his comrades were killed or declared missing in the Belfort sector. 'How far away it is already, that fatal date of August 2! And yet how close it still is!', he wrote in his journal only three weeks after being mobilised. 'On August 2, my life was ripped apart. Until then, I was leading a happy life. I didn't know it, but I realize it now. Since that day, I have known more worries, anguish, pain, and mourning than in all of my twenty-four years.'[5]

From the start, civilians were also targeted, in Belgium, in northern France, on the Eastern Front and in the Balkans. There were massacres, deportations and sexual violence; houses, hospitals and historical monuments were destroyed and cemeteries were desecrated. Only four days after the invasion of Belgium, 850 Belgian men, women and children had already been executed: Germans carried out a ruthless suppression of purported 'francs-tireurs' (civilian guerrilla fighters) and of their accomplices. More than 6,000 civilians were killed in Belgium and northern France in August and September 1914, in massacres that foreshadowed those of the Second World War. Women and children were sometimes separated from men, as in the Tschoffen Wall Massacre in Dinant; at others they were lined up together, without any age distinctions, as at Faubourg des Rivages on 23 August 1914.[6]

Degradations, pillaging and destruction usually accompanied these massacres. In Château-Thierry or Coulommiers, for example, the 'Germans took everything they wanted, even loading quantities of provisions and bedding onto wagons ... Inside the houses, they smashed whatever they did not

5 Ivan Cassagnau, *Ce que chaque jour fait de veuves: journal d'un artilleur, 1914–1916* (Paris, Buchet-Chastel, 2003), pp. 22–4.

6 John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

take.'[7] The conquerors left an indelible imprint as they lashed out at people's homes; anthropologists characterise such actions as crimes of desecration. It was the very private life of residents that the soldiers targeted, as they soiled their bed sheets or covered the interior of their homes with faeces. Desecrating the domestic space, the space of conviviality and of hospitality, also complicated any future return home. 'The "atrocities" one hears of *are true*', stated the novelist Edith Wharton in a letter to a friend. 'It should be known that it is to America's interest to help stem this hideous flood of savagery by opinion if it may not be by action. No civilized race can remain neutral in feeling now.'[8]

After the massacres of the summer and fall of 1914, 1915 saw the escalation of violence on the battlefields as the armies settled into a war of positions, at least on the Western Front.[9] The General Staff sought at all costs to maintain an offensive posture and to keep the hope of a decisive breakthrough alive, even at the expense of heavy casualties – for example, in the attacks described as *grignotage* (literally, 'nibbling') launched by the French commander-in-chief Joffre. A new kind of combatant came into being, sprawled beneath enemy fire, making himself as invisible as possible in his dirty, muddy uniform. In order to survive, the soldier needed to become one with the earth. In 1915, the French army experienced more casualties than in 1916, the year of the great offensive battles of Verdun and of the Somme. In the inferno of Gallipoli, the Australian and Turkish nations were born. For ANZAC troops, the battle was a sanitary disaster almost unequalled during the rest of the war (the exception being the French offensive at the Chemin des Dames in April 1917): with 20,000 wounded and 64,000 suffering from epidemics, the Australian Army Medical Corps was completely overwhelmed.[10]

Civilians were far from spared in 1915, a pivotal year which saw Europe descend into total war. On the Western Front, the atrocities of the invasion period opened onto new kinds of violence against civilians, as Germany began its occupation of Belgium and northern France: forced labour; pillaging of natural resources; famine; deportations to German labour camps. Occupying regimes on both the Western and Eastern fronts served as laboratories of a kind for the military occupations of the 1940s.[11] In the

7 Ibid., pp. 220–1.
8 Letter to Sarah Norton, 2 September 1914, in Edith Wharton, *The Letters of Edith Norton*, ed. R. W. B. Lewis and Nancy Lewis (New York: Scribner, 1988), p. 335; emphasis original.
9 John Horne (ed.), *Vers la guerre totale: le tournant de 1914–1915* (Paris: Tallandier, 2010).
10 Robin Prior, *Gallipoli: The End of the Myth* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).
11 Annette Becker, *Les cicatrices rouges: 14–18. France et Belgique occupées* (Paris: Fayard, 2010).

Balkans, the violence of invasion continued for all of 1915, with the invasion of Serbia by the German, Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian armies.

On the Eastern Front, the war of movement created almost 4 million refugees who fled the advance of German troops.[12] Starting in May 1915, the Russian authorities' scorched-earth policy also forced the displacement of some 134,000 German and Austro-Hungarian nationals, as well as of a million Jews who lived in the Russian Empire and were suspected of being internal enemies. These massive population shifts, which accompanied the 'great retreat' of the Russian army in the spring of 1915, entailed heavy casualties from exhaustion, hunger and epidemics. The deportation policy was then relaxed beginning in the autumn of 1915.

Conversely, for Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, the violence against civilians became more brutal and more systematic in January (in response to Russian victories in the Caucasus), in April (when the Allies landed on the Gallipoli peninsula), and finally in June. It was not only the intensity but the very *nature* of the violence of war that changed in 1915. By the end of the year, the majority of the Armenians in the empire would have been killed, in the first genocide of the twentieth century. The willingness to destroy an ethnic group or a people by physically annihilating it, to draw on the lawyer Raphael Lemkin's definition, as well as that of the 1948 UN Convention, was not new. But never before in Western history had a genocidal policy been carried out so systematically, leading to the death of 650,000 to 850,000 civilians – which is to say about 8 per cent of the victims of the Great War.[13]

The year 1915 also saw the introduction of new weapons which transformed combat practices and dramatically increased violence on the battlefields. Mine warfare, for example, quickly spread across the Western Front, with increasingly high explosive charges. Flamethrowers, first introduced in autumn 1914, became widespread by the spring of 1915, and were used by the attacking waves of the German army. But it was chiefly chemical weapons that made a spectacular breakthrough: after a first deployment on the Eastern Front at the end of January 1915, which failed because of the wind and the cold, asphyxiating gases were used on the Western Front, in the Ypres sector, on 22 April 1915. Poison gas immediately became a symbol of the atrocity of industrial warfare. In reality, there were few victims of gas attacks: armies quickly developed protective masks that limited casualties. But it was the

12 Joshua A. Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse: The Great War and the Destruction of the Russian Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

13 Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

manner in which gas killed that inspired the combatants' horror: it was an invisible death by suffocation, and, for survivors, pulmonary complications that could last long after the end of the war. For the first time in the history of warfare, weapons killed without visible wounds or bloodshed.[14]

The increased sophistication of weapons of war is one of the markers of the development of industrial warfare – a 'war of iron and gas', as the novelist Pierre Drieu de la Rochelle put it. We see this development represented in paintings of the conflict: in 1915, C. R. W. Nevinson painted his famous work *Machine Gun*, in which he showed how, in the industrial age, combatants became fused with their weapons. Ten years later, Marcel Gromaire would take up this theme again in his painting *La Guerre* (1925): five soldiers wait, impassibly, in their trench. The French painter represented them as robot-like, bundled up in their horizon-blue uniforms, to remind viewers that the Great War was foremost a mechanical, industrial and dehumanising war.

Indeed, the dominant image of 1915 was that of a war of machines that destroyed individuals. Combatants were killed by gas; civilians became victims of the submarine war with the sinking of the *Lusitania*, which was torpedoed on 7 May 1915. Science and scientists were put to the service of destruction. Each belligerent nation placed the blame for the corruption of scientific progress on the other camp. From the point of view of the Allies – even if they, too, would use poison gas – chemical weapons proved the barbarity of 'German science' and of Germany's chemists, including the most famous among them, Fritz Haber. 'All social and scientific intercourse with Germany will be practically stopped for this generation', wrote the physicist Rutherford.[15]

Industrial warfare reached its apogee in the following year, 1916, with the titanic confrontations of Verdun and of the Somme. The combatants' experience of war was utterly transformed. For the first time in the history of warfare, firepower did not merely mean inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy; it meant that combatants who were hit by a shell could simply vanish. Without bodily remains, no burial was possible. The desperate quest for the missing would mark the rest of the war and the postwar period. New rituals would have to be invented to pay tribute to the combatants of whom no trace remained: lists of names engraved on monuments to the

14 Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, '1915: Stalemate', in Jay Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 65–88.

15 Elisabeth Crawford, *Nationalism and Internationalism in Science, 1880–1940: Four Studies of the Nobel Population* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 57.

dead, such as at Thiepval in the Somme, and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier – the Great War's quintessential commemorative innovation.[16]

Paul Dubrulle, a Jesuit serving at Verdun in 1916 as an NCO in the 8th Infantry Regiment, described the distinctive fear triggered by artillery bombardment:

> When one heard the whistle in the distance, one's whole body contracted to resist the too excessively potent vibrations of the explosion, and at each repetition it was a new attack, a new fatigue, a new suffering. Under this regime, the most solid nerves cannot resist for long . . . Perhaps the best comparison is that of seasickness . . . [*sic*] finally one abandons one's self to it, one has no longer even the strength to cover oneself with one's pack as protection against splinters, and one scarcely still has left the strength to pray to God . . . [*sic*] To die from a bullet seems to be nothing; parts of our being remain intact; but to be dismembered, torn to pieces, reduced to pulp, this is a fear that flesh cannot support and which is fundamentally the great suffering of the bombardment.[17]

In the midst of battle, physical violence (sensory saturation, deafening, exhaustion) fused with moral suffering (the individual's powerlessness in the face of the chaos of war, terror, dehumanisation). Combatants were trapped in a world without clear boundaries, whose spatial and temporal landmarks had been removed. After the clashes of the beginning of the war, such as the Battle of the Marne and the Battle of Tannenberg, there would be no more battles lasting only a few days. The Battle of Galllipoli took more than eight months, and that of Verdun, ten months. The Battle of the Somme took more than four months, as did the third Battle of Ypres in 1917. The very definition of a battle had changed: it now meant a siege in the open countryside. Considerably enlarged and fragmented, the battlefield now spread over dozens of square kilometres. A new kind of battle was born, whose violence stemmed not only from the kinds of weapons being used, but also from the feeling of powerlessness experienced by soldiers.

In the trenches of the Western Front, mud was everywhere, swallowing up corpses and threatening to drown the living. The violence of war, as it was perceived by combatants, was inseparable from this constant attack on their individuality: there was no more space or time to oneself. In this context, time 'stolen away' from the war – in correspondence with one's loved ones or the

16 Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

17 Paul Dubrulle, quoted in Alistair Horne, *The Price of Glory: Verdun 1916* (London: Penguin, 1962), p. 177.

crafting of trench art – became vital. There was also a violence in waiting and boredom, which took up most of wartime. And when combat finally broke out, soldiers felt like simple victims sacrificed to chance.

This anonymous, depersonalised violence had a double effect on combatants. First, it gave them the feeling that their survival was due only to luck. The syndrome of 'survivor's guilt' would be studied in the years that followed by the psychiatrist William Niederland. 'Still now, almost sixty years later, I hold on to this conviction: I'm here by chance', confided the historian Georges Dumézil in an interview given just before his death in 1986. 'I came out different, on borrowed time.'

Industrial warfare also removed the interpersonal dimension from the act of killing. With the exception of a few snipers, soldiers on the battlefield in 1914–18 rarely aimed at precise targets. Face-to-face killing was uncommon: only when an enemy trench fell into the hands of a group of assailants did hand-to-hand fighting take place. These moments did not demonstrate the technological sophistication that characterised the rest of the war. Combatants used all kinds of primitive weapons: shovel handles, knives and clubs, sometimes crafted by the soldiers themselves. The grenade remained the weapon used most often during these encounters. That said, such moments of interpersonal violence were uncommon. Data on the origins of deadly wounds confirms that artillery dominated the war of 1914–18. During the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1, 70 per cent of French soldiers and 90 per cent of German soldiers had been killed by bullets. Forty years later, only 20–30 per cent of overall deaths were caused by bullet wounds; 70 per cent of the dead were killed by artillery shells.

In 1914–18, soldiers rarely made eye contact with those they killed. Death no longer had a face; rather, it took on the sinister and grotesque appearance of the bodies abandoned in no man's land. Skills long taught in military training, such as bayonet attacks, were of no use in the context of the war's new violence. At the same time, industrial warfare gave rise to a new kind of narrative about violence, one specific to the era of total war and of genocide. Its central theme can be summed up as each individual's struggle to maintain his or her identity in an increasingly dehumanising conflict. Soldiers felt entirely overwhelmed by the violence of war, as if they counted for nothing.

Cultures of Violence in Countries at War

War violence did not only take place on battlefields or in abuses against civilians. The First World War was also waged in images and words: it was

a cultural war. At the time of mobilisation, each of the belligerent nations already had at its disposal a repertoire of collective representations that could kindle xenophobia and nationalism. The enemy of the summer of 1914 was often already the enemy of yesteryear. For the French, for example, the German – soon to be called the *Boche* – was the Prussian, the erstwhile enemy of the war of 1870–1. He was the pillager, the vandal, the occupier from the last war, remembered by the older generation, which had kept his memory alive and passed it on.[18] As for the Germans, many were animated by an irrational fear of Russians, a fear which was mixed with disdain and which was also rooted in an imaginary inherited from the nineteenth century.[19]

Throughout Europe, it was believed that only 'growing nations', in a Social Darwinist perspective, could survive the competition between the major powers. This state of mind fed a real obsession with decadence, which could take various forms depending on the country: fear that global power would shift to the Far East after Japan's naval victory over Russia in Tsushima in May 1905; fear of the French demographic decline; fear of aerial bombardment of cities, for the British; for the Germans, fear of encirclement (*Einkreisung*) by Czarist Russia on one side and by France and Great Britain on the other. Popular literature titles reveal the muffled violence permeating Europe on the eve of the war: *The Coming Terror* (Sydney, 1894); *How the Germans Took London: Forewarned, Forearmed* (London, 1900); *The Infernal War* (Paris, 1908).

In the first weeks of the war, the belligerent nations threw themselves into the conflict with the conviction that their survival was at stake. The hunt for internal enemies began as soon as the mobilisation was announced. State violence was rapidly brought to bear against individuals originating from enemy nations. In 1911, Australia had 33,000 residents born in Germany or in Austria-Hungary. As early as 10 August 1914, they were required to register at the nearest police station and to make a written commitment not to engage in hostile actions. Almost 7,000 of them, including women and children, were interned during the war. German clubs were closed and the teaching of the German language in schools was forbidden.[20] In Paris, in London, in Berlin, rumours labelled recent immigrants, foreign nationals, and ethnic and

18 Michael Jeismann, *Das Vaterland der Feinde: Studien zum nationalen Feindbegriff und Selbstvertandnis in Deutschland und Frankreich (1792–1918)* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1992).

19 Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East: 1800 to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

20 G. Fischer, *Enemy Aliens: Internment and the Home Front Experience in Australia, 1914–1920* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1989).

religious minorities as 'enemy agents', liable to undermine national defence. In Germany, rumours spread that French and Russian secret agents – Jews – were crisscrossing the countryside in cars filled with gold. In Paris, the Maggi company was accused of distributing poisoned milk 'to children . . . so that there would be no French people left after the war'.[21] Most of its 800 stores were looted in the first hours of the mobilisation. Even more surprisingly, this wave of violence against internal enemies also affected countries that were not yet officially engaged in the war, countries far from the front: in several cities in the American Midwest, numerous German immigrants were arrested on suspicion of spying.

Fear was also one of the fundamental mechanisms in the abuses committed against civilians by combatants in the summer of 1914. There is nothing surprising about this: for any army, invading enemy territory entails a period of vulnerability. Soldiers advanced into unknown and unsecured territory without reliable access to provisions. Even before entering Belgium and northern France in early August 1914, German infantrymen, remembering the war of 1870–1, were convinced that they would encounter strong resistance from 'francs-tireurs' perched on bell towers, ready to shoot them as they went by. 'They put out the eyes of the wounded and cut off their limbs one by one', confided a Bavarian soldier to a resident of Nomény (Meurthe-et-Moselle). 'If it wasn't true, our leaders wouldn't have told us so.' A pervasive feeling of insecurity; the exhaustion caused by forced marches; insufficient food and water: everything conspired to increase the Germans' nervous tension. They found an outlet for their anxieties in the massacre of civilians and in rampant destruction. The same pattern occurred on the Eastern Front and in the Balkans. According to Germany, its troops' violation of the laws of war decreed in the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 signalled the supremacy of military necessity over any humanitarian principle.[22]

The German armies' strain was mirrored by the fear of the invaded populations, which was based both on real experiences of violence and imaginary crimes. For example, the stories of 'German atrocities' spread by the 200,000 Belgian and 150,000 French refugees often included terrifying descriptions of children whose arms or hands the Germans had purportedly deliberately cut off. This new version of the myth of the ogre, devourer of children, provoked a real panic in the north of France. Even the Bryce Report

21 Bruno Cabanes, *August 1914: France, the Great War and a Month that Changed the World Forever* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), chapter 7.

22 Isabel V. Hull, *A Scrap of Paper: Breaking and Making International Law during the Great War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014).

on German atrocities (May 1915) sought an explanation for this paroxysmal form of war violence. Rings being stolen? Saber thrusts by uhlans? The myth of children with severed hands would quickly spread across France and the United Kingdom, through caricatures, postcards, editorial cartoons and mobilising posters.

The theme of 'German atrocities' and its counterpart, the imaginary abuses committed against German troops by 'francs-tireurs', fed the demonisation of the enemy for most of the war. When the United States officially entered the war against the Central Powers in the spring of 1917, for example, mobilisation posters still referred to the 'violation' of Belgium –in the sense both of the violation of its neutrality and of sexual violence during the invasion. 'Remember Belgium', warned an American poster in September 1918; it depicted a German soldier with his spiked helmet dragging a little girl by the hand. In other posters, the enemy was portrayed as a gorilla assaulting a woman.[23]

Obviously, this hatred varied in intensity across different countries and social classes, and among different individuals. Similarly, the cultural war against the enemy did not always have the same intensity. The initial mobilisation of the belligerent societies weakened, especially with the crisis of 1917; a period of remobilisation followed in France and Great Britain in the spring of 1918. Despite these nuances, the enemy was often considered a 'race' apart, characterised by his barbarism, his lack of moral conscience and his taste for wanton destruction. Soon the enemy was said to have a foul smell, a bloodthirsty temperament, and animalistic behaviour – to be an animal.[24] In a classic process studied notably by the philosopher René Girard, the animalisation of the enemy allows him to be stigmatised as totally Other – and therefore to be fought without restraint.[25] 'They [the Germans] don't deserve to be treated like human beings', declared a French soldier from the Fourth Army in a letter to his parents on the eve of the Armistice. Another soldier complained about President Woodrow Wilson, who 'spoke to the *Boches* as if they were people. What do you want? He hasn't seen anything, that American', he concluded.[26]

What is striking, in these letters from French soldiers in autumn 1918, is the persistence of representations first generated in the summer of 1914 – despite the

23 John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 323.
24 Juliette Courmont, *L'odeur de l'ennemi* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010).
25 René Girard, *Le bouc émissaire* (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1982).
26 Bruno Cabanes, *La victoire endeuillée: la sortie de guerre des soldats français (1918–1920)* (Paris: Seuil, 2004), pp. 61–2.

grind of four years of war and the 1917 crisis of morale. If this discursive violence lasted more than four years, it is precisely because it was not only the product of a discourse artificially constructed by the state – what has often been called propaganda. The violence against the enemy came from the bottom: it was the outcome of a kind of self-mobilisation by civilians and combatants, as well as of the continuous flow of news between the Front and the interior. We should not imagine that combatants were unaware of the suffering endured by their families, of blockades and hunger in the case of the Central Powers, of the urban bombardment undergone by civilians living in Paris or London, and, for all, of mass bereavement and of material deprivations in daily life.

In much the same way, civilians were perfectly aware of the violence of everyday life at the Front. As early as the summer of 1914, rumours spread by refugees and by the first wounded soldiers disseminated, and often amplified, the news of abuses committed against civilians and of the considerable losses of the first weeks of war. By the end of 1914, Kodak's portable camera allowed thousands of soldiers to take photos of the battlefields. These were then sent to family members and friends far from the Front, evading official censure. At the same time, illustrated magazines sought to purchase war photos from readers: on 14 March 1915, the French weekly *Le Miroir* launched a contest to find the 'most striking war photograph', with a prize of 30,000 francs. After the forests of mutilated trees and the bodies of horses photographed in the early weeks of the war, it was now human bodies – friends or enemy – whose images were published in newspapers.

The question is therefore not whether or not civilians knew about this new war violence, but what they *wanted to know*. From this point of view, the turning point in all likelihood was in 1916. That year, the Prix Goncourt – a prestigious prize in French literature – went to Henri Barbusse's *Le Feu* [*Under Fire*]. In Great Britain, the documentary *The Battle of the Somme* had tremendous public success, attracting almost 20 million spectators. After the slaughter of Verdun and the Somme, the representation of war violence changed forever. 'Combat hammered and forged us to make us what we are', Ernst Junger would state six years later in 'Battle as Inner Experience' (1922). 'This war will always be the axis around which the carousel of our existence turns, as long as we are alive.'

The Future of Violence

What exactly do we identify as the end of the war? If we mean the end of combat, the Armistice of 11 November 1918 suspended hostilities on

the Western Front until the Versailles Peace Treaty was signed. But the question is naturally more complex than this military definition of war and peace allows. The *sortie de guerre*, as French historians now call the period of transition from wartime to peacetime, was a long, chaotic and complex process. Periods of demobilisation and remobilisation succeeded each other, as did gestures of peace and manifestations of the impossibility or refusal to demobilise. Sometimes, as in Germany or Russia, the Great War persisted in the form of a civil war or of new international conflicts. We must then raise the more fundamental question of how war violence mutated in the aftermath of the First World War.

This evolution took various forms across different countries. There were battles between regular armies. For example, the Greco-Turkish War (1919–22) ended, for the first time in Western history, with the mandatory transfer of 1.5 million individuals on the basis of ethnic homogeneity: Turkish citizens living in Turkish territory who were of Greek Orthodox faith were systematically exchanged for Greek citizens living in Greek territory who were of Muslim faith (Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations of 30 January 1923, later integrated into the Treaty of Lausanne of 24 July 1923). There was also ethnic and religious violence, such as in Poland or in Ireland (during the war of independence of 1919–21), as well as class struggles against an 'internal enemy', as in Bolshevik Russia. Violence contesting the colonial presence also broke out in India and Egypt, Algeria and Indochina.

Some of the violence emerged directly from the outcome of war in the autumn and winter of 1918. Thousands of families of German descent were expelled from Alsace, as per the decisions of 'Commissions de Triage' (sorting commissions) created in December 1918. There were skirmishes between Allied occupation troops and German civilians in the Rhineland. In Germany, the months that followed the Armistice of November 1918 were marked first by the Spartacist uprising, by the assassination of Rosa Luxemburg and of Karl Liebknecht, and then by the repression of revolutionary movements by paramilitary groups of the far right. 'We were told that the war was over. That made us laugh. We are the war', a member of the *Freikorps* (German paramilitary volunteer units) declared.

The historian George Mosse used the concept of brutalisation to encapsulate the transformation of war violence into political violence, from violence against an external enemy to violence against an internal one. Since the late 1990s, this idea has been met with so much enthusiasm from historians – and

not only First World War specialists – that the meaning Mosse gave it in his groundbreaking book has often been forgotten. He pointed to veterans' heightened indifference to violence as a result of the traumatic experience of the Front and of the pursuit, in peace, of the aggressive attitudes of war.[27] The term 'brutalisation' is certainly too vague to be fully convincing. Is brutalisation a collective phenomenon which we can observe at the scale of postwar societies (and, in this case, did veterans from victorious nations react differently from those from vanquished ones?), or is it a behavioural trait manifested only by certain veterans? Even if Mosse's stated goal has always been to carry out a 'comparative cultural history' of Europe in 1914–18 and after the war, his examples are largely drawn from German political history.

According to the historian Antoine Prost, the idea of brutalisation is more difficult to apply to France, where a strong republican tradition and pacifist movement mitigated veterans' violence.[28] In Great Britain, brutalisation was much more a 'collective fear' than a reality in the 1920s.[29] For Dirk Schumann, the relative stability of France and of the United Kingdom is due to their displacement of postwar violence towards their colonies, whereas Germany, having lost its colonial empire, was forced to shift lingering war violence onto the political field – against its own citizens.

These interpretations start with the assumption that the experience of war in itself inevitably kindles a response of individual and collective violence, which certain countries might succeed in suppressing with parliamentary democracy and veterans' associations, or in redirecting towards the colonial empire. But might it not be instead the 'culture of defeat',[30] with its emotional mixture of humiliation, frustration and anger, that explains how some countries descended into various forms of political violence while others were able to organise the return of veterans while limiting social disorder? Defeat is neither only the result of the power balance between two nations, nor simply a fact sanctioned by diplomats, but very much a state of mind. In Germany, for example, the feeling of defeat encompassed various realities: the occupation of the Rhineland, the political instability of the Weimar Republic, the humiliation of the Treaty of Versailles, the loss of border

27 George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

28 Antoine Prost, 'The Impact of War on French and German Cultures', *Historical Journal* 37.1 (1994), 209–17.

29 Jon Lawrence, 'Forging a Peaceable Kingdom: War, Violence and Fear of Brutalization in Post-First World War Britain', *Journal of Modern History* 75.3 (2003), 557–89.

30 Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning and Recovery* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003).

regions in central Europe – from which, not coincidentally, most of the members of the *Freikorps* emerged in the aftermath of the war.

In Russia, the weakening of state power opened up space for warlords, who carried out frequent pogroms with their private armies. In this unique period of 'war communism' (1918–21), many forms of violence combined to create a quasi-permanent climate of violence: the struggle against counter-revolutionaries (real or imagined), against foreign intervention forces (which reached 20,000 men in 1919), and against 'class enemies' such as kulaks; the Polish-Soviet war (1919–21), in which some 250,000 people died; ethnic struggles. The Russian philosopher Pyotr Struve, who went from Bolshevism to the counter-revolutionary movement, concluded that 'everything we are living through is only the continuation and mutation of the world war'.

At the same time, the disintegration of European empires led to a resurgence of nationalism in the Caucasus, in the new Baltic states, in Poland, and also outside Europe. In Africa and Asia, there was unrest in proportion to the considerable expectations that colonised people had placed in the person of President Wilson and in Wilsonianism. Many saw the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 as a test of the Western powers' commitment to implement the right to self-determination. The Chinese delegation, made up of young westernised diplomats, argued that former German concessions should be transferred to China. Anti-Japanese demonstrations broke out across China when negotiations collapsed, especially in Beijing on 4 May 1919. In mid April 1919, at the Amritsar massacre, also called Jallianwala Bagh massacre, British troops under the command of Brigadier General Reginald Dyer killed at least 379 protesters; it was a bloody repression of the Indian nationalist movement. The violence that erupted in the colonial world was a direct result of the Great War and of the hope for a new world that it had engendered.

Conclusion

The First World War scarred the twentieth century as a whole with its extreme violence. A century later, who could say that this violence has totally dissipated? Without the Great War, there is no Auschwitz, there are no gulags and there is probably no 'ethnic cleansing' in the Balkans in the 1990s; without the war writers of 1914–18, no Primo Levi; without the eruption of nationalism, no ulterior development of totalitarianism.

To stress the continuity between the First and Second World Wars is not to defend the idea that Italian and German fascism were the inevitable result of the frustrations and resentment provoked by the peace treaties; the 1930s'

spiral into totalitarianism has many roots. On the other hand, the lack of distinction between combatants and non-combatants, the fear of the internal enemy, the industrialisation of death on the battlefield, the degrading and murderous treatment of prisoners of war, the extermination and deportation of an entire people on the basis of ethnicity are collective practices of violence that were inherited from the Great War and that reached their climax in later conflicts.

In the aftermath of the Great War, veterans did not share the same ideologies, but they were all convinced of the fragility of peace and the possible resurgence of violence. Some of them bitterly observed that the conflict continued in other forms. During the First World War, Michal Römer, born near Vilnius in 1880, had joined the Polish Legions of Józef Pilsudski with the secret hope that one day Lithuania would be independent. On 1 April 1919, he stated what many of his contemporaries had also perceived:

> The war, finished in autumn, has not died away. Peace and a return to stability appear to be as remote, if not more distant, as in autumn when the war was formally approaching its end. Evicted from the trenches, frontlines and from the official and regular struggle of militarised powers, it reached into human societies and transformed itself into a state of permanent chaos, a *bellum omnium contra omnes*. Formally, the regular war has stopped, but the catastrophe, of which the war was only the first act, goes on and is far from over. Who knows if it is only in its initial stage?[31]

Bibliographical Essay

It is somewhat surprising that the study of war violence is relatively new in research on the First World War. It was not until the 1970s and the publication of John Keegan's groundbreaking volume *The Face of Battle* (New York: Penguin, 1976) that military historians began to describe the battlefield from the point of view of combatants and the effects of the new weapons of war – artillery, machine guns, flamethrowers, etc. – on soldiers' bodies. According to Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, in *14–18: Understanding the Great War* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2003), this delay can be explained by historians' reluctance to work on extreme violence and their inability to understand the concrete reality of combat. In a recent book – *Combattre: une anthropologie historique de la guerre moderne* (Paris: Seuil, 2008) – Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau also observes how difficult

31 M. Römer, 'Kulisy misji kowienskiej: Fragment Dziennika. Wiosna 1919', *Arcana* 70–1.4–5 (2006), 52, cited in Jochen Böhler, 'Enduring Violence: The Postwar Struggles in East-Central Europe, 1917–1921', *Journal of Contemporary History* 50.1 (2015), 58–9.

it was for social scientists (historians, sociologists) who had participated in the First World War to reflect on their own experience.

For a long time, it was the immense body of war literature, produced both during and after the war, that bore witness to the extreme violence of the First World War. Photographs, documentary films, artifacts and the material culture of the conflict also led historians – more accustomed to work on written sources than on images – to change their approach; see Stéphane Audoin Rouzeau, *Les armes et la chair: trois objets de mort en 1914–1918* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2009). With these newly rediscovered sources, the violence of war is now at the centre of historical research. Historians of the First World War have used several approaches to study the violence of war. Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau et al. (eds.), *La violence de guerre, 1914–1945* (Paris: Editions Complexe, 2002) and George Kassimeris (ed.), *The Barbarization of Warfare* (New York: New York University Press, 2006) compare the violence of war in the First and Second World Wars. Other books examine specific years in the Great War, identifying them as turning points in the escalation of war violence. See, for example, John Horne (ed.), *Vers la guerre totale: le tournant de 1914–1915* (Paris: Tallandier, 2010). Other historians have chosen to study specific battles, staying as close as possible to the experience of combatants. See Jean-Michel Steg, *Le jour le plus meurtrier de l'histoire de France, 22 août 1914* (Paris: Fayard, 2014) and Damien Baldin and Emmanuel Saint-Fuscien, *Charleroi, 21–23 août 1914* (Paris: Tallandier, 2012) for the Battle of the Frontiers; also see Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, for the Battle of the Somme, and Antoine Prost and Gerd Krumeich, *Verdun 1916* (Paris: Tallandier, 2015).

On combat as a bodily experience, the groundbreaking book is Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face-to-Face Killing in Twentieth-Century Warfare* (London: Granta, 1999). On the medical history of the Great War, the literature has been deeply revitalised since the 2000s: see, for example, Sophie Delaporte, *Gueules cassées: les blessés de la face pendant la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Noésis, 2001), and Mark Harrison, *The Medical War: British Military Medicine in the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). On the violence of war and shell-shock, see the *Journal of Contemporary History* 35.1 (2000), special issue: 'Shell-Shock'.

The history of war violence includes the histories of the representation of the enemy, the mobilisation of societies at war, and the motivations of combatants. The concept of 'war culture', introduced by Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker in 'Violence et consentement: la "culture de guerre" du premier conflit mondial', in Jean-Pierre Rioux and Jean-François Sirinelli (eds.), *Pour une histoire culturelle* (Paris: Seuil, 1997), is at the core of this cultural approach. Also see Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, *14–18:Understanding the Great War*, and Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction: Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Recent research has led to a re-evaluation of the impact of war violence on civilians during the First World War. These studies may focus on the violence of the invasion period in the summer of 1914 (John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001)), on sexual violence (Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *L'enfant de l'ennemi* (Paris: Aubier, 1995)), on violence in occupied countries (Annette Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Hachette, 2003)), on the Allied blockade of Germany, on violence committed against prisoners of war (Heather Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War in the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)), or on the question of refugees.

There are a great number of books dedicated to the Armenian genocide, its origins, its specificity in the history of twentieth-century genocidal violence, the reactions of contemporaries, and the memory of genocide: see especially Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), Stefan Ihrig, *Justifying Genocide: Germany and the Armenians from Bismarck to Hitler* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), and Jay Winter (ed.), *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Finally, the idea of *sortie de guerre* which was introduced in France explores the processes and rhythms in which societies transition from war to peace. For a general approach, see Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Christophe Prochasson (eds.), *Sortir de la Grande Guerre: le monde et l'après-1918* (Paris: Tallandier, 2008). On the brutalisation of postwar societies, the standard book is George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). The question of demobilisation in France is discussed in Bruno Cabanes, *La victoire endeuillée: la sortie de guerre des soldats français, 1918–1920* (Paris: Seuil, 2004). On violence in postwar Germany, see Mark Jones, *Founding Weimar: Violence and the German Revolution of 1918–1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). On the question of 'war after the war' in central Europe and in Russia, see Robert Gerwarth and John Horne (eds.), *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence after the Great War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

15

Witnessing and Fighting Nazi Violence during World War II

JOCHEN HELLBECK

As Soviet troops closed in on Germany in January 1945, Ilya Ehrenburg, Soviet Russia's foremost wartime writer, published an article in the Red Army's newspaper, reminding his readers about the larger meaning of the war they were fighting:

> Advancing toward Berlin are not only our divisions and armies, but also legions of petrified mothers, inconsolable widows, and children whose hair has turned gray . . . Advancing toward Berlin are the boots, shoes and slippers of those who have been gassed, among them the tiny shoes of a two-year-old. . . . Buried alive by the Germans, the children have crawled out of the pits and antitank trenches; they are already at the border, eager to get to Berlin . . . These children are not going to go away. They are our conscience. They are guiding our tanks and soldiers.[1]

In histories of the Second World War, Ehrenburg often figures as a fierce propagandist whose fiery calls on Red Army men to kill Germans contributed to the exceptional violence that defined the German-Soviet war.[2] But in important other respects his writings have been overlooked: as carriers of detailed information about Nazi atrocities in the East, and as catalysts of a moral position from which Ehrenburg's readers, whether they were soldiers at the front or civilian workers in the war economy, were to encounter and defeat the German invaders. The children killed in ravines and death camps were not going away: Ehrenburg's editorials ensured that they lived on in the conscience of Soviet survivors. The violence practised by the German occupants, Ehrenburg felt, should incite moral outrage and lead the Red Army

1 *Krasnaia zvezda*, 10 January 1945. For the 'cabbage of Majdanek', see below pp. 319–20.
2 E.g. Karel C. Berkhoff, *Motherland in Danger: Soviet Propaganda during World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), pp. 182–93, and Antony Beevor, *The Fall of Berlin* (New York: Viking, 2002), pp. 25–36, in addition to the literature discussed in Peter Jahn (ed.), *Ilja Ehrenburg und die Deutschen* (Berlin: Museum Berlin – Karlshorst, 1997).

soldiers on towards victory and retribution. Ehrenburg had been writing in this vein since the first days of the German invasion – his January 1945 piece marked a culmination of a multi-year campaign to inform, agitate and educate.

World War II differed from preceding wars on three counts: its staggering overall death toll of some 60 million people; the fact that most of the casualties were on the Allied side; and the much higher death rate, again on the Allied side, of civilians over soldiers. The mass killing of civilians was a strategic objective of the war. 'Millions of people', Richard Bessel writes, 'lost their lives not as a consequence of military campaigns with military objectives, but as a result of actions the fundamental aim of which was just to kill civilians.'[3] The war's epicentres of violence were territories of China and the Soviet Union occupied by Axis forces for years. This chapter focuses on the Soviet case, the arena of greatest civilian suffering anywhere in the world.

Germany's war in the East rested on a transgression of the moral norms of humanism, which Nazi leaders purposely disavowed to justify the promotion of a particularist racial ethic and the mass annihilation of 'unworthy' life. Both the moral provocation that defined the Nazi project and its cruel effects for people who were defined as antithetical to the 'Aryan race' registered profoundly with Soviet observers. Millions of people witnessed German atrocities on Soviet soil first-hand or learned about them through Ehrenburg's writings, political seminars held inside the Red Army, or letters received from family members who had experienced German rule. Soviet commentators seized on the nature of German violence to build a moral case about their war effort, expressed in the imperative need for 'Soviet humanity' to fight 'fascist barbarism'. This narrative, replete with detailed information about German atrocities, was paramount in mobilising Soviet people to fight Nazi Germany. In the eyes of many, it also redeemed the Soviet regime, absolving it of its own ample record of political violence.

Increasingly during the war, the Soviet moral language of anti-fascism shaped Western attitudes towards Nazi Germany. Documentations of Soviet suffering presented in newspaper reports or films circulated through many parts of the world where they produced a groundswell of popular sympathy with the Soviet Union. In the process, decidedly communist norms of fighting the German fascist threat to humanity, and fighting it passionately, passed over to the West. While historians have recently begun to point to the deep sense of moral superiority over Nazi Germany as a key binding agent that held the anti-

3 Richard Bessel, 'Death and Survival in the Second World War', in Michael Geyer and Adam Tooze (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Second World War*, vol. III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 252–76, at 252.

Hitler coalition together and ultimately accounted for Allied victory in 1945, their preconceived notion that morality resided in the West and was defined by it reduces this important insight. Challenging this view, the present chapter traces how Soviet writers, journalists, filmmakers and many other eyewitnesses of German violence formulated an activist and universal response to German fascism that would become a benchmark of moral value for Western observers as well. While Stalin disavowed universal ideals after the war, this did not diminish their wartime vitality and reach, or the part the Soviet Union played – materially as well as conceptually – in defeating Nazi Germany.

Shared hatred of Hitler held the Allies together until the end of the war, but the alliance fractured soon after the German regime of violence had been overcome. At the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, Stalin's brazen insistence on indicting the Germans for a mass murder of Polish officers at Katyn that in fact Soviet forces had committed backfired spectacularly. Many international observers began to distrust the entire Soviet documentary record on German war crimes. With these sources in discredit, some of the worst German atrocities in the East were eclipsed from the historical record. In the postwar West, anti-fascism yielded to anti-totalitarianism, as Stalin began to appear as another Hitler. Western anti-communism and liberal notions of Soviet society as totalitarian have conspired to produce an exceedingly politicised understanding of the Soviet war effort as masterminded by a cynical regime. This interpretation is insensitive to a Soviet documentary record of Nazi violence awash with powerful human emotions: shock, grief and hatred. It represses from view the existential perspectives of violated people roaming ravaged homes. Even though serious scholars today believe most Soviet records of Nazi atrocities to be truthful, the Katyn dossier forming the sole exception, this acknowledgement has barely translated into an injunction to explore these records beyond their instrumental aims.

One reason for this omission is a Western-centric understanding of the Holocaust, which liberal scholars have posited as the defining human challenge of the Second World War. Such an understanding elides millions of non-Jewish Soviet victims of the Nazi campaign against 'Judeo-Bolshevism' – POWs, communists, partisans and slave workers. In their defence, Holocaust scholars often claim that the Soviets disregarded or sought to repress knowledge about 'the Holocaust', conceived as both the particular suffering of Jews and the overall record of the Nazi war of annihilation in the East.[4] Yet as this

4 See Karel C. Berkhoff's historiographical discussion, '"Total Annihilation of the Jewish Population": The Holocaust in the Soviet Media, 1941–45', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 10.1 (2009), 61–105, at 62–5.

chapter contends, a wide range of people in the Soviet Union were informed about Nazi violence against Soviet POWs and civilians, Jewish as well as non-Jewish. It brings into view multiple local initiatives to record German atrocities and shows how they fed into the work of high-level propagandists like Ehrenburg. It establishes how documentations of violence catalysed support for the Red Army and hatred towards the German invaders, throughout the Soviet Union and beyond its borders. Everywhere in Nazi-occupied Europe, whether we consider Emmanuel Ringelblum's clandestine archive in the Warsaw ghetto or French wartime reports on the Nazi massacre in Oradour-sur-Glane, the documentary impulse served similar mobilising needs. What set the Soviet case apart were a much more pervasive practice of German violence and, in response to it, much broader efforts on the Soviet side to record enemy atrocities. The documents produced in the process brimmed with a singular emotional charge: they urged their readers to fight and kill.

The Record of German Violence

In the European theatre, World War II began with a double attack on Poland, with Germany invading from the West on 1 September, and the Soviet Union following suit, from the East, days later. Stalin's and Hitler's regimes stood out among other European states as two ruthless dictatorships that openly advocated massive political violence for the sake of enacting their social or racial utopias. Both began occupation with campaigns to crush national elites on enemy soil, killing thousands of captured officers, aristocrats, intellectuals, political activists and priests. Both carried out deportations on a vast scale. Yet these similarities obscure important differences. Germany's occupation policy was more lethal as it served a more ambitious purpose to incorporate into the Aryan Reich portions of Poland which were predominantly inhabited by ethnic Poles and Jews.[5] Entrusted with a scheme of comprehensive racial reordering, SS chief Heinrich Himmler prepared the resettlement of ethnic Germans from other parts of Europe into western Poland. To clear the ground, Himmler dispatched his *Einsatzgruppen* killing squads into Poland where they executed scores of Polish nationalists and forced Jews into ghettos, randomly killing many in the process.[6]

5 During the invasion alone, Germans murdered 50,000 Polish civilians and 7,000 Jews. Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin, 2009) pp. 78, 96.

6 Christopher Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939–March 1942* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press; Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), chapters 2–4; Peter Longerich, *Holocaust: The Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 143–4.

The 'higher' law of Germany's racial survival and enhancement necessitated the enormous violence in Poland in the eyes of many. Condescension towards the neighbour in the East as a less civilised type also played a role. As the occupation progressed, Joseph Goebbels recorded Hitler's 'devastating' verdict on the Poles: 'More like animals than human beings.'[7]

Intensely deadly, the Polish campaign emerged in retrospect as but a prelude to Operation Barbarossa, the code name for Germany's war against the Soviet Union, which radically extended and reforged Nazi violence in World War II. During the invasion of Poland, at least some German army leaders saw themselves bound by the conventions of international law and objected to the SS terror on these grounds.[8] Operation Barbarossa was planned in such a way as to ensure that every single German soldier became a conscious agent of the Nazi war of annihilation. This campaign would be unlike any other, Hitler believed, because it would be fought against Nazism's mortal enemy, Judeo-Bolshevism. Military orders issued in spring 1941 commanded an army of several million conscripted men to adapt their conscience to the laws of Nazi racial ideology. To prevail against the 'criminal', 'cruel' and 'barbaric' Soviet enemy, German soldiers were directed to set aside principles of humanity and international law.[9] Only a year before, Himmler had drawn a principled line between the Nazis as 'civilized Europeans' and the 'Bolsheviks'. As he presented Hitler with a plan to improve the racial stock in Germany's east by separating racially valuable Polish children from their parents, he described the project as 'cruel and tragic' for the concerned individuals, but 'mild and . . . better, when compared to the Bolshevik method of physical extermination of a people, a method that we reject in principle as non-Germanic and impossible'.[10] Now, about to come face to face with millions of 'Bolsheviks' who were supposedly more beastly than human, German soldiers were to resort to the very cruelty and ruthlessness that was ascribed to the enemy. As Hitler directed his generals in a 30 March 1941 address: 'The troops must fight back with the methods with which they are attacked.'[11]

7 Stephen Fritz, *Ostkrieg: Hitler's War of Extermination in the East* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2011), p. 20.
8 Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution*, pp. 15–21.
9 Gerd Ueberschär and Wolfram Wette (eds.), *'Unternehmen Barbarossa': Der deutsche Überfall auf die Sowjetunion, 1941: Berichte, Analysen, Dokumente* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1991), pp. 302–3 and 319–23; Fritz, *Ostkrieg*, p. 30.
10 Browning, *Origins of the Final Solution*, pp. 69–70.
11 *'Unternehmen Barbarossa': Der deutsche Überfall auf die Sowjetunion 1941*, ed. Gerd R. Ueberschär and Wolfram Wette (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schönling, 1984), p. 303.

Beyond the specific instruction to isolate and execute Soviet commissars, Nazi notions about the nature of the Jewish Bolshevik enemy were vague, however. German commandos proceeded to apply them broadly and lethally. As they entered Soviet homes the first question soldiers would pose to frightened residents was: 'Jude, Kommunist?' Individuals that fitted either category would be taken away and executed. *Einsatzgruppen* internal reports revealed some conceptual flux as they alternated between 'communists', 'Jewish communists' or 'Jews and other communist elements' in their classification of the same people they had shot. By August 1941, the widespread sentiment that Jews and Bolsheviks were interchangeable, or that at the very least Jews firmly backed the Bolshevik system, so much so that 'every Jew, in principle' had to be regarded as a partisan (as Heinrich Himmler instructed his commandos in Bialystok) prompted the SS to annihilate entire Jewish settlements, complete with women, children and the elderly.[12] The mass killing of Soviet Jews thus unfolded as part of Nazism's ideological struggle against the carriers of 'Judeo-Bolshevism', an enemy whom the Nazis portrayed as terroristic and savage.

These killings refashioned Germany's way of war. The murderous campaign against the Soviet agents of 'Judeo-Bolshevism', who could be killed with greatest ease as they were imagined as most radically removed from European norms of civilisation, became the template into which the treatment of Jews from Germany and other parts of Europe was fitted. The image of the Judeo-Bolshevik enemy, and the forms of mass violence that it generated, travelled west in autumn 1941, inaugurating what is often identified as the Holocaust. The fact that the decision to annihilate all the Jews of Europe came after, and was an effect of, Operation Barbarossa underscores how centrally the war against the Soviet Union defined the Nazi regime of violence.

With almost the same exterminatory zeal that they showed toward Jews, Germans proceeded to killed Soviet POWs. Their systematic destruction was an integral component of Nazi policy towards the Soviet Union. The lethal motive extended beyond starving to death millions of 'superfluous eaters'. Soviet POWs (even absent the commissars who had already been shot) were widely identified as 'Bolsheviks', with all the consequences that this appellation entailed. German military guards were under explicit orders to train their weapons on captured Red Army men with 'particular

12 *The Einsatzgruppen Reports: Selections from the Dispatches of the Nazi Death Squads' Campaign against the Jews in Occupied Territories of the Soviet Union July 1941 – January 1943*, ed. Yitzhak Arad, Shmuel Krakowski and Shmuel Spector (New York: Garland, 1989), see Reports 19, 27, 32, 60, 108, 124 for the year 1941; Longerich, *Holocaust*, p. 198.

severity'.[13] When the SS began to introduce gas vans in Sachsenhausen and gas chambers in Auschwitz, it performed the first deadly experiments on Soviet POWs. By the end of January 1942, almost 60 per cent of the 3.35 million Soviet prisoners of war who had been captured by then had died. This number dwarfed even the number of Jews who had been killed by the Germans up to that point.[14]

To turn German soldiers into agents of the Nazi war of annihilation required ongoing indoctrination beyond the Barbarossa decrees of spring 1941. This work was performed by army field orders, including the directive that Field Marshal von Reichenau issued to the Ukraine-based soldiers of the Sixth Army on 10 October 1941. Reichenau reminded the German soldiers stationed 'in the East' of their political mission 'to free the German people once and for all from the Asiatic-Jewish danger'. His order specifically called for the annihilation of resisting enemy male soldiers, female soldiers ('degenerate women') and suspected partisans as perpetrators of 'subhuman insidious cruelty'.[15]

Three months after Reichenau issued this order, *Pravda* presented it to its readers as an order 'so monstrous and cynical that all Soviet people and the entire civilised world must know about it'.[16] In May 1942, *Pravda* published excerpts from Göring's 'Green Folder', a policy directive that ordered the total economic exploitation of the conquered Soviet Union for the exclusive needs of Nazi Germany.[17] Already in a November 1941 address to Moscow officials, Stalin had quoted from German military orders found on the battlefield to describe the nature of 'Hitlerism' and 'fascism' (he used these terms interchangeably). Stalin also quoted from Herrmann Rauschning's recently published 'Conversations with Hitler': 'Hitler says: I liberate man from the degrading chimera called conscience. The conscience, as well as education, cripple man. I have the advantage of not being constrained by any theoretical or moral concerns whatsoever.'[18] Soviet leaders publicised available German documents, the Barbarossa decrees in particular, to flag the Soviet war effort as

13 Longerich, *Holocaust*, p. 224.

14 Christian Streit, *Keine Kameraden: Die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen 1941–1945* (Bonn: J. H. W. Dietz, 1991); Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*, pp. 160–6.

15 Several of these army orders are reprinted in *'Unternehmen Barbarossa'*, pp. 339–45.

16 *Pravda*, 15 January 1942; reprinted in *Zverstva, grabezhi i nasiliia nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov* (Leningrad: Ogiz, Gospolitizdat, 1942), pp. 112–15. The order was presented in slightly edited form: for instance, where the original referenced 'Judeo-Bolshevism', *Pravda* wrote 'Bolshevism'. German original: www.ns-archiv.de/krieg/untermenschen/reichenau-befehl.php#begleit.

17 *Pravda*, 4 and 7 May 1942; reprinted in *Zverstva, grabezhi*, pp. 115–30.

18 I. V. Stalin, *Sochineniia. Tom 15* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo 'Pisatel', 1997). Stalin's citation is a recognisable though not verbatim quotation from Rauschning's book, which he did not reference. While the scholarly consensus today is that Rauschning invented at least

a moral campaign against a depraved invader. Ilya Ehrenburg practised this method from the very outbreak of the war. He was also one of the earliest Soviet observers to call attention to the Nazi annihilation of Jews in western parts of the Soviet Union. On 25 August 1941, *Pravda* carried his accusation: 'They kill children, forcing their mothers to watch. They force terrified old men to act the buffoon. They rape girls. They stab, torture, and burn. Because of them, Belostok, Minsk, Berdichev, and Vinnitsa have turned into terrible names.' 'Mankind as a whole', Ehrenburg concluded, 'is now waging war against Germany – not for territorial gains, but for the right to breathe.'[19]

During the first months of the invasion, Soviet knowledge of German atrocities against civilians was episodic. In November 1941, the media reported the shooting murder of an estimated 52,000 Jews from Kiev, men, women and children, at Babi Yar.[20] This grisly picture filled up with more detail after the Red Army drove the Germans back from near Moscow and in southern Russia. In January 1942, authorities dug up the remains of thousands of executed civilians in Kerch and Rostov, for the most part Jews. Images showing landscapes of bodies strewn along antitank ditches, or close-ups of the dead were publicised in Soviet newspapers and magazines.[21] A commission of Moscow historians began to interview survivors and witnesses of German occupation, starting in the liberated areas near Moscow.[22] Planning also began for the creation of an Extraordinary State Commission (ChGK) that would catalogue the crimes committed by the Germans, in anticipation of postwar trials and reparations. That commission took up its work in November 1942.[23] Yet it was only with the sustained

some of his 'Conversations with Hitler', wartime readers outside of Germany accepted the book as fact.

19 Il'ia Erenburg, '24 Avgusta 1941 goda', *Pravda*, 25 August 1941.

20 Mordechai Altshuler, 'The Holocaust in the Soviet Mass Media during the War and in the First Postwar Years Re-examined', *Yad Vashem Studies* 39.2 (2011), 121–68. *Einsatzgruppen* reports record that 33,771 Jews were killed at Babi Yar on 29–30 September 1941.

21 David Shneer, *Through Soviet Jewish Eyes: Photography, War, and the Holocaust* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2011), pp. 100–8.

22 Over the course of the war this Commission on the History of the Great Patriotic War would produce hundreds of interviews with Soviet survivors and witnesses of the German occupation regime. See Jochen Hellbeck, 'The Antifascist Pact. Forging a First Experience of Nazi Occupation in the Wartime Soviet Union', *Slavonic and East European Review* 96.1 (2018), 117–43.

23 Nathalie Moine, 'La commission d'enquête soviétique sur les crimes de guerre nazis: entre reconquête du territoire, écriture du récit de la guerre et usages justiciers', *Le Mouvement Social* 222, Enquêter sur la guerre (2008), 81–109, at 83–4. According to the commission's own calculations, around 32,000 public representatives, most of them Communist Party members, took part in investigating Nazi war crimes, and more than 7 million Soviet citizens directly collected and prepared documents for the commission. Natal´ia S. Lebedeva, *Podgotovka Niurnbergskogo protsessa* (Moscow: Nauka, 1975), pp. 26–31.

liberation campaign that followed on the heels of Soviet victory at Stalingrad that these various bodies started to amass a comprehensive record of German atrocities on Soviet soil.

Since early 1942 the Political Administration of the Red Army had been publishing brochures detailing atrocities committed by the 'German fascist invaders'. In spring 1943, a new phrase entered these brochures: the 'mass annihilation of the Soviet civilian population'. As the authors stressed, the Germans conducted their 'physical extermination' in a 'planned manner and on a mass scale'.[24] The discovery of crimes unprecedented in size and nature jolted Soviet observers. At the Krasnodar trial of eleven Soviet citizens who had collaborated in Nazi atrocities against Soviet civilians and POWs, held in July 1943, new evidence about the killing methods used by the Germans came to the fore, in particular their use of gas vans adapted to asphyxiate passengers by exhaust fumes. Filmmaker Mark Troianovskii, who directed an official camera team at the trial, wrote to his mother from Krasnodar:

> You of course know about the trial from the newspapers. But I must tell you that I was all choked up when I heard Dr. Kazel'skii's story about how the Germans killed his sick patients, the testimony of the teacher Inozemtseva who talked about the killing of the children, and others. Witness Ivan Ivanovich Kotov we couldn't record with audio. His throat is paralysed after he was poisoned with carbon oxide. It's as if he has arisen from the dead. He's the only one who has miraculously survived the gas van.[25]

War crime trials, at Krasnodar and elsewhere, were but a few of numerous sites at which Soviet citizens were instructed and educated about the nature of the 'German-fascist atrocities'. In liberated towns and villages, Red Army political officers gathered rank and file soldiers around the exposed corpses of victims or near former Gestapo prisons. Local survivors who had personally witnessed Nazi atrocities spoke; agitators lectured about the horrors committed by the Germans. These 'meetings of vengeance' culminated with ritualistic vows by the assembled soldiers to fight the enemy with redoubled force. The sight of German massacres of civilians held enormous mobilising power for the present soldiers; it stirred into action even recruits who had initially disliked Stalin or were unwilling to fight. In the face of such atrocities, the war acquired an even higher moral purpose: 'as every day of occupation meant more women raped, towns destroyed, and fellow citizens humiliated

24 *Zverstva nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov. Dokumenty. Vypusk 7* (n.p., 1943), p. 3.
25 *Kino na voine. Dokumenty i fakty*, ed. V. Fomin (Moscow: Materik, 2005), pp. 208–9.

and murdered', soldiers felt a mandate to move westward quickly, in order to save lives.[26]

Red Army soldiers who observed the effects of Nazi occupation corresponded with Ehrenburg, feeding him with evidence that they knew he needed for his editorials. Twelve days after the liberation of Liady, formerly a Jewish town on the border of Russia and Belorussia, soldier V. Izvekov wrote to Ehrenburg sharing stark impressions: 'How many corpses of children with faces distorted by pain? Among the murdered there is even a six-month-old child with a pacifier in its mouth, apparently buried alive, as there are no traces of murder.' Izvekov's letter ended like a ritualised 'meeting of vengeance', with a description of his unit marching 'forward to the West, past the martyrs' grave', his fellow soldiers' eyes filled with 'tears of rage, such rage that no one has previously experienced'.[27] Izvekov's letter was a single sheet in a huge dossier of personal documentation about the nature and effects of German rule that was produced in the immediate aftermath of Soviet liberation. Everywhere in the liberated areas, a wartime correspondent noted, 'people were seized with the spontaneous need to write, to testify. Stacks upon stacks of testimonies piled up in the political sections of regiments and divisions. They were written on scraps of Gestapo forms, on the backs of idiotic Goebbels posters, and more frequently in school notebooks. There is no statute of limitations for what was written in them.'[28] Visiting Kharkov in February 1943, days after the Red Army had retaken the city, British correspondent Alexander Werth was struck by the urge of residents to tell their stories. Invariably, these testimonies would centre on hangings: 'public hangings. It was that which seemed to have left the deepest impression of all.'[29] This is confirmed in hundreds of testimonies that the Moscow historical commission collected from witnesses of German occupation throughout the liberated areas of Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia.

Violence figures at the centre of these testimonies, not only and not primarily because the historians asked the witnesses specifically to talk about enemy atrocities, but because the German style of violence had etched itself in witnesses' minds as the most harrowing thing they had ever experienced. Etta Maizles, a Jewish survivor of the Minsk ghetto, used drastic words

26 Brandon Schechter, *The Stuff of Soldiers: A History of the Red Army in World War II through Objects* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019), p. 115.

27 Arkadi Zeltser and Erina Megowan, 'Differing Views among Red Army Personnel about the Nazi Mass Murder of Jews', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 15.3 (2014), 563–90, at 587.

28 Writer Nikolai Atarov, quoted in Sorokina, 'People and Procedures', 825, n. 88.

29 Alexander Werth, *Russia at War, 1941–1945* (New York: Barrie & Rockliff, 1964), p. 610.

when she talked about the series of mass killings in the ghetto that also claimed the lives of two of her own children: 'He [the German] is a beast, worse than a tiger, worse than anything in the world. You cannot imagine what kind of beasts they are, bloodthirsty to no end, unless you come into their way.' One of the many German 'actions' in the ghetto disturbed Maizles in particular – the systematic killing in March 1942 of 300 children who lived in an orphanage in the Minsk ghetto after their parents had died:

> What happened to the children was unbearably sad. They were innocent victims of these monsters. By then I'd seen so many horrors, but when I saw them massacre those children, I just couldn't take it. I was beside myself. If you'd seen that pile of children, those bodies with broken legs. They'd pick them up by the legs and smash them on the corners and walls of the buildings. You can understand how such horror could make you lose your mind. I couldn't live, couldn't work. For days on end I didn't say a word. Everything inside me went numb.[30]

Witnesses referred to the inhuman and debasing style of German violence as the defining characteristic of the occupation regime. A Belorussian partisan who was interviewed as early as December 1942 (he and others had been flown to Moscow to update communist officials about the state of partisan warfare in the swamps and forests of Belorussia) remarked on the gallows that the Germans had set up 'on squares, in parks and in front of theatres. Lately gallows were put up in every village district. They string them up with hooks in their jaws, like fish.'[31] The defiling of culturally sacred places (theatres and city parks) and the inhuman methods of killing are crucial markers in this testimony. Partisans noted that the Germans deliberately placed the gallows in public places, 'for everyone to see'.[32] Nazi violence, along with the German denigration of Soviet culture and the fact that the Germans only barked orders at Soviet civilians but did not address them as citizens, challenged survivors' self-understanding as Soviet people.

At least some Soviet citizens who had previously called out the communist regime for its repressive policies came to espouse a novel understanding of Soviet power in the light of Nazi violence. Lev Nikolaev, a professor of medicine in Kharkov, had kept a secret diary since 1936, in which he

30 Former members of German police battalions in the East confirmed these monstrous actions: Edward B. Westerman, *Hitler's Police Battalions: Enforcing Racial War in the East* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), p. 173.

31 Nauchnyi Arkhiv Instituta Rossiiskoi istorii Rossiiskoi Akademii nauk (NA IRI RAN), f. 2, razd. II, op. 4, d. 34, l. 6: Interview with Nikifor S. Pankratov, 29 December 1942.

32 NA IRI RAN, f. 2, razd. II, op. 4, d. 6: Interview with Aleksei N. Mal'chevskii, 10 September 1942.

compared Stalinism and Nazi Germany as two similarly blood-drenched dictatorships. Nikolaev kept his diary through the war. His first-hand experience of the Germans' 'cunning cruelty' clarified his moral horizons, making him long, like many other Soviet citizens, for 'liberation' by 'our' Red Army soldiers.[33]

After liberation, one of the first things Soviet officials did in liberated cities and towns was to assemble the entire local population for political meetings. Their purpose was to reinforce the antithesis of fascist inhumanity and Soviet humanity, a central trope in the ongoing Soviet ideological battle against fascism. Similar to the Meetings of Vengeance practised in the Red Army, these gatherings were typically held in front of gallows – sometimes with corpses of Soviet partisans still hanging from them. A Melitopol official who was interviewed by the Moscow historians described the overwhelming effect of a meeting that he convened six days after the city's liberation. He was the first to speak, followed by priests and a few Red Army officers. The last speakers were four partisans – 'two comrades [i.e. party members] and two girls, all of them from Melitopol'. They joined the partisans after the Germans had shot their families and parents. 'What we witnessed was not a regular meeting – it was a single roaring and howling. The stories were so horrible, we all stood there, unable to move.'[34]

Such meetings were held everywhere on liberated soil, including in the Baltic republics and the western regions of Ukraine and Belorussia, which the Soviet Union had annexed in the wake of the Hitler–Stalin Pact. In these areas, where memories of Soviet occupation and violence in the early phases of the Second World War were fresh, stories of individual survival of Nazi terror were particularly important to buttress Soviet claims of 'liberation'. Significantly, the Germans never contemplated a comparable interview project during the period of their rule over Soviet lands, as its civic potential contravened their colonial ambitions. Soviet civilians, Reichenau's order declared, were to be motivated by fear of German reprisals, not to be addressed as citizens.

Soviet photographers and film crews played a crucial role in weaving evidence of atrocities into the moral tale of Soviet humanism battling fascist inhumanity, and disseminating this story to broad audiences. Camera teams recording the westward advance of the Red Army were under specific instructions to 'Record the atrocities and trail of destruction caused by the

33 NA IRI RAN, f. 2, razd. VI, op. 6, d. 7a and 7v.
34 NA IRI RAN, f. 2, razd. VI, op. 11, d. 2, l. 3.

Germans, record the most horrific and painful scenes, without any regard to aesthetic concerns. Cameramen shooting this material should be directed by no other concern than the obligation to fixate the Germans' plunder and infamy on our soil, for which they will have pay one day.'[35] A well-known documentary made from this footage was Aleksandr Dovzhenko's *Battle for Our Soviet Ukraine*, which the director had initially titled *Ukraine in Flames*. The film's principal subject is Ukraine's and Ukrainians' unspeakable suffering at the hands of the Germans. The camera pans over an opened mass grave in Kharkov containing the remains of 14,000 victims of Nazi terror, to the voice of a speaker: 'You who are alive, look at us! Don't turn away from our terrible trenches. We cannot be forgotten or ignored. There are many of us. We are a great multitude in Ukraine. Do not forget us! Take revenge on Germany for our suffering!' The film also showed footage of public meetings in the wake of liberation, and it featured surviving witnesses, including Lev Nikolaev who showed effects of famine and torture on his body to the camera, standing in front of Kharkhov's ransacked medical institute, his former workplace that, he explained, had been torched by the Germans.

'You who are alive, look at us!'

These words in Dovzhenko's film reached audiences the world over. From early on, Soviet leaders sought to bring information about the extent and nature of Nazi crimes beyond Soviet borders, to shore up hatred against Germany and to solidify the anti-Hitler alliance. In the process, they transmitted to Western Allied nations their moral understanding of the war against 'fascist inhumanity'. Among the earliest to do so were Ehrenburg and other Soviet Jewish writers who gathered in Moscow on 24 August 1941 for an international radio appeal. At the meeting, Solomon Mikhoels described fascist violence as 'elaborate methods of unheard of, unprecedented, brutal, bloodthirsty cruelties' that aimed at 'humiliation and [man's] degradation to a level lower than that of an animal'. Mikhoels called on Jews around the world to fight Nazi leaders passionately. This was the 'duty . . . of all humanity'.[36] Many of the Moscow Jewish writers subsequently became a Jewish Antifascist Committee (JAC). When committee members

35 *Tsena kadra. Kazhdyi vtoroi – ranen, kazhdyi chetvertyi – ubit. Sovetskaia frontovaia kinokhronika 1941–1945 gg.*, ed. V. P. Mikhailov and V. I. Fomin (Moscow: Kanon, 2010), p. 378.

36 Shimon Redlich (ed.), *War, Holocaust and Stalinism: A Documented Study of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in the USSR* (Luxembourg: Harwood, 1995), pp. 177–9.

toured US cities in summer 1943 to raise funds for the Soviet war effort they drew huge crowds. The efforts of the JAC to collect documents on the annihilation of the Soviet Jews contributed to the publication in the United States of a 'Black Book'. The publication featured an epigraph by JAC leader Itzik Fefer: 'The globe is too small to hold both mankind and fascism.'[37]

Shown in Allied countries during the war, Soviet documentary films detailing Nazi violence made a powerful impression. *Moscow Strikes Back*, a film devoted to the first liberation campaign in December 1941 and January 1942, came out in US movie theatres in August 1942 and won an Oscar in 1943. A critic for the *New York Times* described the film as at heart 'a picture of the brutal desolation wrought by war, of the monstrous desecration of humanity that the Nazis unleashed throughout the world. And any one who sees it cannot help but be deeply, implacably aroused.' To call *Moscow Strikes Back* the most exciting of all contemporary war films was an understatement; another reviewer noted: 'The film makes you want to jump out of your seat in the movie theater and join those fighting on the screen in order to purge once and for all Nazism's degeneracy and senseless cruelty from the face of this earth.' 'While the film was shown, the theater hall, crowded with people, was completely silent', a third reviewer noted. 'The people sat there holding their breath. But as the last images flickered over the screen, everybody erupted in applause and cheers.'[38] In Great Britain, popular identification with the Soviet war against Germany proved even greater than in the United States, where at least until D-Day the Pacific War relegated the European theatre to a secondary front. At an August 1942 exhibition of war photographs in London, it was the 'Russian atrocity section' that made by far the greatest impression.[39] Soviet anti-fascist posters trickled into the United States where they prompted strong reactions from curators who lauded the ability of Soviet graphic art to communicate forcefully, incite action and foment hatred of the enemy. 'They kill Germans', a critic summarised the visual power of these posters. Compared to this Soviet standard, British and American posters looked 'pretty dull'.[40]

37 *The Black Book: The Nazi Crime against the Jewish People* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1946), p. iii.

38 *New York Times*, 30 August 1942; *New York Post Meridian*, 2 December 1942; *Motion Picture Herald*, December 1942, cited in *Tsena kadra*, 1009–10 (reverse translations from Russian).

39 Janina Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust: Interpretations of the Evidence* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004), p. 51.

40 Peter Kort Zegers and Douglas Druick (eds.),*Windows on the War: Soviet TASS Posters at Home and Abroad, 1941–1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 128.

The British and US governments contributed to the outpouring of popular sympathy with the Soviet ally by toning down or even actively countering references to the violent nature of the Stalinist state. The British Ministry of Information issued a manual, 'Arguments to Counter the Ideological Fear of Bolshevism', instructing journalists to think of notions such as the 'Red Terror' as figments of the Nazi imagination.[41] The Roosevelt administration enlisted director Frank Capra to produce propagandistic films that portrayed the Soviet Union solely in a favourable light. The 1943 film *Mission to Moscow*, made in a faux-documentary style, went so far as to proclaim that prominent Soviet communists executed during Stalin's Great Purges were in fact German and Japanese agents. But while engaging in overt propaganda, Western governments remained highly sensitive about the workings of propaganda, especially when it came to atrocities. Americans recalled the denunciations of the German 'Huns and Apes' during World War I which had had the effect of pulling their country into a campaign that they later regretted having joined. British censors removed pictures of killed Soviet civilians from the stock of *Moscow Strikes Back*, ostensibly on the grounds that the disturbing images could produce a popular neurosis. British wartime films regularly showed pictures of dead women and children killed by the Blitz; Soviet observers suspected that the British operated from a position of disbelief towards the Soviet documentary record.[42] Such disbelief affected Soviet communists in particular, as a Russian director who represented the Soviet film industry in Hollywood during the war experienced first-hand. ('Here, every word coming from a Soviet person is treated as propaganda, with the word "propaganda" essentially denoting a disease that robs Americans of their entire property and leaves them hungry', he wrote to his Moscow superiors in 1943.) But US officials extended their scepticism also to atrocity reports spread by Polish and Jewish activists as early as 1940. They feared being 'propaganded into the war'.[43]

These attitudes were put to the test in April 1943 when the German government started a campaign to inform the world about the 'real face of barbarous Bolshevism'. In a Russian forest near the village of Katyn, the Germans had discovered the remains of over 4,000 Polish officers, who, they established, had been murdered by Soviet security forces in 1940. Propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels embraced the discovery as an 'excellent

41 Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), p. 297.
42 *Kino na voine*, pp. 647–8; see also p. 638.
43 Mikhail Kalatozov to I. G. Bolshakov, 1 November 1943: *Kino na voine*, p. 597; Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust*, p. 29

opportunity ... to refute most drastically the attempts undertaken in England and the United States to whitewash Bolshevism'.[44] Against Goebbels's hopes, Katyn did not split the wartime alliance. It wasn't necessarily that Western leaders believed the Soviet counter-claims, forged documents 'proving' that the Germans had murdered the Polish officers in 1941. Churchill, for one, believed the 'Bolsheviks' to be 'capable of the worst atrocities', as he confided to the head of the Polish government in exile.[45] But if he and Roosevelt chose not to engage the German claims, they did so for two reasons: one was a deep-seated distrust towards any form of atrocity propaganda. The other was their knowledge of the barbaric nature of the Nazi system. Ironically, Soviet wartime propaganda had provided much of this knowledge in the first place. By 1943, the Western Allies had become firmly imbued with the moral position of their Soviet ally: the Nazi regime posed a singular threat to humanity and had to be defeated with the power of passionate hatred.

If, after Stalingrad, the discovery of mass grave after mass grave in liberated areas of Russia and Ukraine had dwarfed prior Soviet notions of Nazi crimes that had formed in 1941 and 1942, the Red Army's move into Poland in 1944 disclosed German atrocities in yet another previously unthinkable register. Upon seeing the Majdanek death camp, director Roman Karmen wrote that the gas vans that the Germans had operated in Russia were but an 'artisanal form of murder', compared to the brutally efficient 'conveyer belt method of human annihilation' practised in Majdanek. Karmen pointed out a 'shocking detail': the Germans had used the bones and ashes of the victims to fertilise cabbage that they grew on nearby fields. A defining feature of Majdanek for him was its 'pan-European significance': trainloads of people from Denmark, Norway, Czechoslovakia and France were 'brought here, only to be annihilated'. Karmen's documentary footage fully expressed his script notes. Successive shots of gas chambers, ovens, crematoria and warehouses filled with prisoners' clothes, shoes, glasses, toys and hair emphasised the cold and unsparing human annihilation practised in

44 Scholars today believe that the Soviets killed a total of 14,500 Polish officers and policemen at various execution sites, of whom 4,421 were murdered at Katyn. Anna M. Cienciala, Natalia S. Lebedeva and Wojciech Materski (eds.), *Katyn: A Crime without Punishment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 1, 332.

45 Claudia Weber, 'Stalin's Trap: The Katyn Forest Massacre between Propaganda and Taboo', in Philip Dwyer and Lyndall Ryan (eds.), *Theatres of Violence: Massacre, Mass Killing and Atrocity throughout History* (New York: Berghahn, 2015), pp. 170–85, at 174. The British Ambassador in Russia offered a different opinion, declaring that the Polish officers had been murdered by the 'Huns', 'just to make propaganda pictures'. Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust*, p. 48.

Majdanek. The camera dwelled on rows of thick cabbage growing on a field in the shadow of the camp towers, and it zoomed in on the passports of camp inmates – French, Italian, Dutch, Greek and Polish – to reveal its Europe-wide significance. While the film certainly portrayed Europe as a victim of Nazi violence in order to underscore the Red Army's stature as Europe's liberator (and counter German claims to the contrary), Karmen's notes also brimmed with an ethical concern: 'The entire world, all future generations, must know about what happened behind the barbed wire of the German death machine . . . in which Hitler's henchmen killed more than a million free people.'[46]

The response that the Soviet discoveries and appeals met throughout the world was mixed, however. When correspondent Alexander Werth sent the BBC a detailed report on the discovery of the Majdanek camp in August 1944, his editors in London turned it down, thinking it was a Soviet propaganda stunt.[47] In the United States, popular empathy with tales of Soviet suffering appeared to be fading. When *Ukraine in Flames* came out in American theatres in spring 1944, a reviewer described it as 'yet another documentary film on the war in the Russia . . . all about dead bodies, burning cities, weeping women'. 'Perhaps it is the duty of every American to see with their own eyes the horrors of the fascist invasion', another reviewer noted, 'but it is an unpleasant duty.'[48] These reactions strikingly differed from how *Moscow Strikes Back* had been met two years earlier. All the more noteworthy was a *New York Times* article of October 1944 that presented as a major news item the fact that W. Averell Harriman, the American Ambassador to Moscow, 'supported . . . the many reports that have come out of Russia concerning widespread German atrocities'. According to the paper, Harriman specifically singled out the 'character of the German atrocities on the eastern front': their 'utterly unbelievable' ruthlessness and efficiency.

> The atrocities in the east, he explained, were entirely different from those committed by the Germans in western Europe. While the shooting of hostages in the west was shocking, he pointed out, these incidents were relatively less than the killing of large masses of people, especially Jews, in the east. He mentioned in this connection the reports from Lublin, Poland, where Soviet and Polish authorities have estimated that as many as

46 Karmen's script notes (undated, 1943): *Tsena kadra*, pp. 846–7.

47 It was not, Werth remarks in his memoirs, until the 'discovery in the West of Buchenwald, Dachau and Belsen that Western media became convinced that Majdanek and Auschwitz were also genuine'. Werth, *Russia at War*, p. 890.

48 *New York Sun* and *Journal American*, both 3 April 1944, cited in *Tsena kadra*, pp. 1031–2.

1,500,000 persons were killed in a 'slaughter house' operated by the Germans at Majdanek.[49]

Beyond backing the factual truth of Soviet atrocity reports, Harriman's account echoed the moral understanding of German violence that characterised Soviet responses to Nazi crimes in the East.

In Berlin, military intelligence specialists at the Fremde Heere Ost office (FHO) avidly studied Soviet media publications, filing many articles in folders entitled 'Soviet hatred and atrocity propaganda'. The Germans were as incredulous as the officials at the BBC. An internal October 1944 memorandum reported on Soviet coverage of the 'so-called "Majdanek annihilation camp near Lublin"'. 'Aside from Jews', the report read, 'representatives of all European nations are said to have been liquidated using ostensibly the most refined methods.'[50] The FHO specialists understood the Soviet reporting as an 'exaggerated propaganda action' aimed at countering the earlier German revelations about Katyn. The other purpose they noted was the incitement of hatred. Captured Soviet soldiers confirmed to their German interrogators that 'the constant atrocity propaganda filling the Soviet press is stirring up civilians as well as soldiers to a boiling point. All they seek is revenge.'

In February 1945 the FHO specialists faced a new flood of Soviet reporting – this time on the Auschwitz death camp, which the Red Army had liberated a few weeks earlier. Replete as they were with detailed information about the history and anatomy of the camp as relayed by individually named survivors, the reports appeared to challenge the disbelief of their German readers: the intelligence officers no longer provided distancing commentaries of their own, allowing the Soviet documents to speak for themselves. The translated materials included an editorial from a Soviet army newspaper which stated that the Germans had burned about 6,000,000 people in Auschwitz ('Killing, burning, poisoning – those are the German professions') and appealed to its readers: 'Comrade! You have seen a lot on your glorious advance since Stalingrad. Everywhere one finds bloody traces of German crimes. You have seen and experienced a lot, but Auschwitz surpasses this all as the most cruel testimonial of German atrocities.'[51]

As they read enemy reports, the FHO officers paid particular attention to the works of Ehrenburg. Their dossier for 1944/45 contains several full

49 'Harriman Confirms German Atrocities', *New York Times*, 27 October 1944.
50 National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD, T78/483, 254–71.
51 NARA, T78/483, 82–7.

translations of his pieces, without commentary. One of them, penned in mid August 1944, discussed the retrenchment of German troops into East Prussia ahead of an anticipated Soviet storm.[52] Ehrenburg began by quoting an order by the commander of a tank army instructing subordinate commanders to enforce a

> fundamental break with all hitherto existing rules and habits. Russia's expanse gave the German Wehrmacht a freedom that is no longer appropriate in Germany . . . Everything necessary could be taken where it was found . . . Everywhere the German soldier was the master. In German cities and villages, the situation is the opposite. The people with whom we are dealing here are our fellow people. To respect and help them is our duty.

Ehrenburg commented:

> Shamelessly, the Commander of the 3rd Tank Army, General Reinhardt, admits that his soldiers wreaked havoc and plundered in Russia like barbarians . . . The bandit general speaks to his chaps: 'Remember, Germany is not Russia!' Very well! We will firmly remember the German general's words. We will repeat them in Königsberg and Berlin. We were liberators until we reached the German border. Now we are judges.

Ehrenburg reminded his readers of the flurry of orders issued by German commanders during the occupation of Soviet lands, orders that had been fully implemented if judged by the sight of razed towns and ravines overflowing with corpses that the Red Army had encountered on its path of liberation:

> After three bitter years, we are advancing on Germany past Ukraine, past Belorussia, past the ashes of our cities and the blood of our children. Woe is the land of the murderers! Not only our troops have reached the German border. Advancing with us are also the shadows of the dead. Who is knocking on the doors of Prussia? The dead and murdered, killed by gas or fire, the old people from Trostianets, the children from Babi Yar, the martyrs from Slawute, the dust and ashes from the ovens in which millions of helpless people were burned[53] . . . Where are these shadows moving toward? Toward Königsberg, toward Berlin. Right behind them follow we, the living. Nothing will stop us now. We can't sleep because of our sorrow and anger. Woe is the land of the wrongdoers. Woe is Germany!

52 NARA, T78/483, 236–9; published as 'Gore im!', *Krasnaia zvezda*, 20 July 1944.

53 Trostianets (mispelled): (Maly) Trostenets, a Nazi extermination camp on the outskirts of Minsk. Slawute (mispelled): Slavuta, a city in western Ukraine whose sizable Jewish community the Germans wiped out during World War II. Ehrenburg carefully picked murder sites from different union republics to emphasise the universality of Soviet suffering, a consistent Soviet mandate.

The FHO officers singled out Ehrenburg as a signal author of atrocity propaganda on the enemy side. Had they read more widely they would have noticed a veritable outpouring of soldierly declarations of grief, outrage and revenge steeped in detailed evidence of horrors personally witnessed or experienced, which filled Soviet army papers in the last phase of the war. Letter writers included seasoned soldiers who had seen evidence of atrocities pile up on their westward march: 'The Hitlerites mocked the Jewish population with particular cruelty. In Artemovsk they forced virtually all the local Jews together, stripped them naked and drove them into underground shafts. They sealed the entrances to leave the people to die slowly and painfully from asphyxiation.' Some of them had escaped German captivity and talked about life in Nazi camps:

> The fascists taunted the POWs in various ways. They forced the sick, wounded and exhausted soldiers to sing the song 'Katyusha', and shot those who didn't sing along. They made Jews jump onto barbed wire. Every day they gathered the entire camp population in line formation and shot between 50 and 60 people. Then we would be dismissed. They threw morsels of foul horsemeat into the crowd of hungry POWs and opened fire onto those who tried to grab a piece. How many humiliations I endured over twenty days! But I know who abused me. I'll enter the fascist den and will get even with the abusers.

Others were survivors of German occupation who had recently enlisted into the Red Army: 'Dear editors! We, Communist youth from the occupied regions, have borne on our shoulders all the burdens of German occupation, we have seen hundreds of fascist crimes. Herewith we are sending you accounts about German atrocities by Communist youth members from the unit of Senior Sergeant Voloshchuk and Senior Sergeant Chabanov.'[54] What all the letters bore in common were trappings of Ehrenburg's documentary style and accusatory stance, with which their authors were undoubtedly familiar. The letters also confirmed Ehrenburg's central point: the memory of those who had suffocated in gas vans, or were tortured, burned or hanged, was alive. It lived on in the Soviet soldiers who advanced towards Berlin, thirsting for a reckoning.

Bibliographical Essay

While the Eastern Front now commonly figures as the epicentre of violence during World War II, scholars disagree on the nature and cause of this violence. In *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), Timothy Snyder casts the German

54 Sergei Ushakin and Aleksei Golubev (eds.), *XX vek: Pis'ma voiny* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2016), pp. 580–7.

and the Soviet dictator as rival evils, jointly responsible for the suffering of millions. Michael Burleigh refers to the USSR and Nazi Germany as 'brotherly enemies', each the common foe of decent humankind (*Moral Combat: A History of World War II* [London: Harper, 2010], p. 76). Mark Edele and Michael Geyer's co-authored piece oscillates between such neo-totalitarian framings and an insistence on the singularity of Nazi violence – a reflection perhaps of disagreements among the two contributing authors: Mark Edele and Michael Geyer, 'States of Exception: The Nazi–Soviet War as a System of Violence, 1939–1945', in Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick (eds.), *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 345–95. On the other edge of the spectrum, Christian Streit, in *'Keine Kameraden': Die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen 1941–1945* (Paderborn: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1978), and the Hamburg Institute for Social Research, in Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann (eds.), *War of Extermination: The German Military in World War II* (New York: Berghahn, 2000), have spearheaded research that explains Germany's war of annihilation in terms of colonial imperialism, anti-Semitism and anti-communism. For an excellent synthesis, see Christopher Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939–March 1942* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007). Paul Hanebrink's *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018) makes a more pointed contribution by showing how in the wake of World War I anti-communist fears became fused with a longstanding history of anti-Semitism to spark a new, genocidal war. Klaus-Michael Mallmann makes the important point that Soviet Jews in the Nazi imagination, as instigators and carriers of a 'Jewish Bolshevik terror regime', differed from Jews elsewhere in Europe. The war against the Soviet Union, he points out, began with designs for a 'final solution of Bolshevism'. 'Only with the conflation of two central images of the enemy – Jews and communism – and their mutual imbrication and reinforcement did a genocidal dynamic arise.' Klaus-Michael Mallmann, 'Die Türöffner der "Endlösung". Zur Genesis des Genozids', in Gerhard Paul and Klaus-Michael Mallmann (eds.), *Die Gestapo im Zweiten Weltkrieg: Die 'Heimatfront' und besetztes Europa* (Darmstadt: Primus, 2000), pp. 437–63, at 443–4.

Earlier histories of the Holocaust insisted on a rigid distinction between war and genocide and imagined the Holocaust apart from other horrors perpetrated during World War II. By contrast, recent studies are sensitive to the intricate dynamic between ethnic prejudice and war, and they embed the mass murder of Jews into the history of the Second World War; see, for instance, Omer Bartov's locally grounded study, *Anatomy of a Genocide: The Life and Death of a Town Called Buczacz* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018). Several recent studies have called attention to the Soviet victims of the Holocaust; see Yitzhak Arad, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009); and Yad Vashem's online platform, 'The Untold Stories: The Murder Sites of the Jews in the Occupied Territories of the Former USSR', www.yadvashem.org/untoldstories/homepage.html.

Nazi violence rested in good measure on the elaboration of a distinct Nazi morality – one sanctifying German culture, and necessitating the eradication of 'Jewish' universality; see Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), Eric Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004) and Raphael Gross, *Anständig geblieben: Nationalsozialistische Moral* (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 2010). For the Soviet side, historians have barely begun to historicise Stalinist

wartime morality. Many studies favour liberal projection over historical understanding: Richard Overy, author of *Why the Allies Won* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), writes that the Anti-Hitler Alliance functioned as a moral coalition 'only to the extent that the West was able to suppress or at least lighten their [Soviet] ally's dark image' (p. 296). In line with this view, scholars understand Soviet wartime documentations of Nazi violence predominantly as politically motivated atrocity propaganda; see Marina I. Sorokina, 'People and Procedures: Toward a History of the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in the USSR', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 6.4 (2005), 797–831, and Karel Berkhoff, *Motherland in Danger: Soviet Propaganda during World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012). However, when placed into the wider context of wartime documentation across Nazi-occupied Europe, Soviet documentary efforts no longer appear unique. Everywhere in Europe, Nazi violence prompted initiatives among occupied populations to record acts of violence in order to solicit support in the struggle against Nazism. Everywhere records of German violence were created for the purposes of mobilising readers into action. See Laura Jockusch, *Collect and Record! Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) and Sarah Bennett Farmer, *Martyred Village: Commemorating the 1944 Massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

By May 1943, 80 per cent of the Red Army's personnel had reportedly participated in at least one of more than a thousand ritualised Meetings of Vengeance, held on sites where Germans had tortured and killed Soviet civilians (Brandon Schechter, *The Stuff of Soldiers: A History of the Red Army in World War II through Objects* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019), p. 112). Mark Edele makes a strong case for the revenge thesis, by pointing out that all Allied soldiers were more likely to rape German women than those of other nationalities, and that the Red Army was particularly fierce among the occupiers of Germany. Mark Edele, 'Soviet Liberations and Occupations, 1939–1949', in Richard J. B. Bosworth and Joseph A. Maiolo (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Second World War*, vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 487–508, at 492–4. Even those historians who support the revenge thesis do so mostly on political grounds; they portray the soldiers as stirred up by a propaganda of hatred and skirt the issue of personal experience. Oleg Budnitskii tries to discount the revenge thesis by arguing that some Jewish Soviet officers whose families had been killed by Nazis practised restraint, while many soldiers who did not suffer personal losses raped German women; see Oleg Budnitskii, 'The Intelligentsia Meets the Enemy: Educated Soviet Officers in Defeated Germany, 1945', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 10.3 (2009), 629–82. And yet his study reads as a sustained demonstration of the workings of a Soviet morality shaped by the experience of Nazi violence and summed up in the dictum, 'We're not Germans.'

16

Violence and the Japanese Empire

TAKASHI YOSHIDA

On 6 April 1868, the Meiji emperor proclaimed the Imperial Oath and 'restored' the imperial rule, beginning the Meiji period (1868–1912). At the time, the emperor was a mere 15 years old, so the royalists from southern domains, often of humble origin inside the samurai class, overthrew the Tokugawa government in his name. The Oath was written, not by the emperor, but by these royalists, and one of their objectives was abolishing 'harmful' (rōshū) feudal customs of the previous periods.[1] The Tokugawa government had provided the people with a no-war environment for more than two centuries. While nearly 3,000 peasant uprisings and other social upheavals occurred during the Tokugawa period (1600–1867), the government experienced neither domestic nor international warfare.[2] Nonetheless, the Tokugawa era was not necessarily less violent than the Meiji era. The Tokugawa government used various kinds of punishment, including torture, in order to maintain domestic peace and order.[3] After all, it was the Meiji government that introduced Western-style penal reforms, abolished some harsh older punishments and built new Western-style prisons and a Supreme Court. In addition to judicial reforms, the new government accomplished various economic, political and social reforms in order to demonstrate that the new empire was as civilised as the Western powers.

To examine whether the Tokugawa or the Meiji government was more violent, one needs to define 'violence'. If it is defined as physical violence such as war, torture and murder, the Meiji government may have been more

1 Peter Duus, *Modern Japan* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), p. 86.

2 Between 1590 and 1867, more than 2,800 peasant uprisings were organised, and most of them occurred during the second half of the Tokugawa period. See Mikiso Hane, *Peasants, Rebels, and Outcastes: The Underside of Modern Japan* (New York: Pantheon, 1982), p. 7.

3 Regarding a study of punishment and prisons in Japan from the Tokugawa to the Meiji periods, see Daniel Botsman, *Punishment and Power in the Making of Modern Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

violent than the Tokugawa, because, similar to other colonial governments in the West, it committed atrocities and acts of aggression both within and outside the empire, including the Civil War (1868–9), the Satsuma Rebellion (1877), the Sino-Japanese War (1894–5) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5). Nonetheless, if the term includes structural violence, as defined by Johan Gultung, a sociology professor who founded the Peace Research Institute in Oslo, the evaluation may be more difficult, because structural violence includes poverty, hunger, and inequalities based on ethnicity, gender, nationality and religion.[4] If one counts these latter forms of violence, one may conclude that Tokugawa Japan was as violent as its successor.

A comparison among the Meiji (1868–1912), Taishō (1912–25) and Shōwa (1925–89) periods in Japan yields troubling results. Like Meiji Japan, Taishō Japan continued to be energetically involved in international military conflicts such as World War I from 1914 to 1918 and the Siberian intervention from 1918 to 1920. As the scale of the military conflicts widened, the degree of violence abroad also intensified. Nonetheless, many more citizens of the empire, including ethnic minorities from its colonies, probably enjoyed liberal domestic politics, including labour, civil rights and feminist movements. Compared with Meiji and Taishō, the early Shōwa period brought the most severe destruction to Asia and the Pacific from the early 1930s to 1945, during which millions of people perished. From 1945 to the end of the Shōwa, however, Japan embraced the so-called Peace Constitution and Japanese have enjoyed a much less violent period than the wartime and prewar years.

While it is difficult to decide which period of the Japanese empire was more violent, violence in the empire was without doubt too abundant to list entirely. Nonetheless, it can be grouped as violence related to imperialism/militarism, racism and sexism. This chapter details some of the specific examples in each category in order to demonstrate institutionalised violence committed by the state from the birth of the empire in 1868 to the end of its existence in 1945. The term 'violence' in this chapter includes not only physical but also structural violence.

Imperialism/Militarism

The imperial era military conscription system, first announced by the emperor in 1872 and promulgated a year later, was a piece of institutionalised

4 Johan Galtung, 'Violence, Peace, Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research* 6.3 (1969), 167–91.

violence that symbolised Japanese imperialism and militarism. The Meiji government carefully studied conscription law in Europe and the United States and modelled their system after the one in Prussia. Proponents of conscription such as Ōmura Masujirō, a scholar of Dutch studies, had been familiar with Prussia's military studies through Dutch publications since the Tokugawa period. The law mandated that all non-exempted 20-year-old Japanese citizens serve in the military for three years and enlist in the reserve forces for four years.[5]

The size of the conscripted military was small at first. In 1874, 5.3 per cent of all 20-year-olds (14,461) were called to serve. In 1875 and 1876, the numbers were 2.4 per cent and 3.2 per cent, respectively. In the early Meiji years, the government was not able to afford a large military, and it selected a small number of capable young men from a large pool of candidates. The system at first provided a series of exemptions from mandatory conscription through legal means. For example, bureaucrats, medical school students, public university students, students studying abroad, heads of households, adopted sons, siblings of a drafted brother, criminals imprisoned a year or more, and those who paid 270 yen were all exempted from the service.[6]

By 1889 the empire needed a large military, and these legal exemptions, except for those pertaining to men with criminal records, disappeared. The empire drafted more than 10 per cent of the eligible 20-year-olds in 1896, nearly 20 per cent in 1919, and approximately 60 per cent in 1943. In 1944, the government revised the law and inducted not only the 20-year-olds, but also 19-year-olds. This enabled the government to draft more than a million men. In 1945, approximately 90 per cent of the nineteen- to twenty-year-olds who passed the medical examination served in the military. By the end of World War II, the imperial army and navy had enlisted more than 7 million servicemen.[7]

Those enlisted servicemen included ethnic minorities such as Koreans and Taiwanese. Taiwan became Japan's colony in 1895, after the Sino-Japanese War, and Korea became a part of the Japanese empire in 1905, after the Russo-Japanese War. By 1943, both the army and the navy adopted Taiwanese volunteers. While the total number of Taiwanese volunteers in the navy is unknown, nearly 5,000 Taiwanese served in the army by the end of the war.

5 Katō Yōko, *Chōheisei to kindai Nihon, 1868–1945* (*Conscription and Modern Japan, 1868–1945*) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1996), pp. 57, 68–9, 75.
6 Ibid., pp. 20, 46–7.
7 Yoshida Yutaka, *Nihon no guntai, heishitachi no kingendaishi* (*Japan's Military*: *The History of Servicemen in Modern Japan*) (Tokyo: Iwanami, 2002), pp. 19, 197–8.

The government was planning to pass a conscription law that would make military service mandatory for Taiwanese, but the war ended before it was executed. As to the Koreans, by 1943 the military enlisted more than 16,000 and military service became mandatory for the Korean minorities in 1944. In 1944, the army drafted 45,000, while the navy inducted 10,000. Both military institutions drafted the same number of servicemen in the following year. While the empire made military service compulsory in Korea, it did not extend suffrage to those minorities in its colonies.[8]

According to Fujiwara Akira, a veteran who later became a renowned scholar of modern Japanese history, the imperial military can be summarised as a violent organisation that stripped individuality from servicemen with strict discipline and punishment. In the military, absolute obedience was mandatory, and senior officers constantly used physical abuse and violence against their juniors. While the military officially prohibited corporal punishment, certain officers believed that physical punishment would cultivate strong minds and patience among the servicemen, transforming them into tough and courageous soldiers. Newly recruited soldiers learned that they were no longer in the civilian world through public humiliation and physical abuse from their seniors. Slaps on the face, beatings on the buttocks and blows of fists were all common in both the army and the navy. As violence was so systemic, many Japanese soldiers were accustomed to it, and did not hesitate to exercise violence on their own troops when they became senior in the military.[9]

Indeed, imperial Japan had a highly disciplined military. In the final years of the Asia-Pacific War (1941–5), the imperial military demanded that its servicemen fight to the death. Nonetheless, the battles themselves did not inflict the most critical damages on them. One estimate suggests that starvation and malnutrition-related disease caused more than half of the deaths of 2.3 million servicemen. Another study finds that 70 per cent of the dead succumbed to hunger and related illnesses. In the postwar years, some of the veterans who survived the war in the Philippines and New Guinea even confessed to having committed cannibalism during the war. Although the exact figure of the deaths from starvation is unknown, the loss of air and naval supremacy

8 Katō Yōko, *Chōheisei to kindai Nihon*, pp. 247–8, 254–5; Oguma Eiji, *Nihonjin no kyōkai* (*The Boundaries of the Japanese*) (Tokyo: Shinyōsha, 1998), p. 455.

9 Fujiwara Akira, *Nankin no Nihongun: Nankin daigyakusatsu to sono haikei* (*Japanese Army in Nanjing: The Nanjing Massacre and Its Historical Contexts*) (Tokyo: Ōtsuki shoten, 1997), pp. 76–7; Ichinose Shunya, 'Kōgun heishi no tanjō' '(*The Making of Imperial Soldiers*)', in Aiko Kurasawa, et al. (eds.), *Senjō no Shosō* (*Understanding Battlefields*) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2006), p. 14.

to the Allies in China and in the southern Pacific in the end of the war brought substantial deaths from starvation among Japanese servicemen.[10]

Similarly, drowning was another significant cause of deaths among Japanese servicemen. One study concludes that approximately 182,200 navy servicemen and 176,000 army servicemen died by drowning during the Asia-Pacific War. In short, 15.6 per cent of the 2.3 million Japanese servicemen who died (including ethnic minorities) were killed in the sea. The Allied strikes were the direct causes of these deaths, but the military exacerbated the problem by packing too many servicemen into each ship. In addition, due to the shortage, the military used not military transport boats but commercial cargo ships that were more vulnerable to the Allied assaults. Servicemen's deaths from drowning during the Asia-Pacific War were four times those of the Russo-Japanese War.[11]

While the number is much less striking compared with the deaths by starvation or drowning, deaths from suicide attack were also significant among Japanese servicemen. Both the imperial army and the navy decided to utilise suicide tactics to alter the tide of war in early 1944. It was in February that the navy first commissioned a prototype of a human torpedo. The Army Chief of Staff urged the Commander in charge of the defence of the Philippines to employ suicide tactics in order to destroy enemy morale. The first *kamikaze* suicide attack occurred at the Battle of Leyte Gulf in October 1944. More than 4,000 servicemen (including those from Taiwan and Korea) died in suicide attacks by aircraft, and 43 percent of the navy's and 23.5 per cent of the army's suicide forces were teenagers, the youngest of whom were 16 years old. In addition, 68 per cent of the navy's and 55 per cent of the army's servicemen deployed for suicide missions were rank-and-file military men. As to the officers, the military preferred reserve officers for these missions, meaning that those who graduated from ordinary colleges and universities, instead of the Imperial Army Academy or the Navy Academy, were more likely to be selected for those missions.[12]

10 Fujiwara Akira, *Tennō no guntai to Nit-Chū sensō* (*The Emperor's Military and the Japan-China War*) (Tokyo: Ōtsuki shoten, 2006), p. 11; Hata Ikuhiko, *Shōwashi no nazo o ou*, vol. 11 (*In Search of Puzzles in the History of the Shōwa Period*) (Tokyo: Bungeishunjū, 1993), p. 183; Yuki Tanaka, *Hidden Horrors: Japanese War Crimes in World War II* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), p. 112; Yoshida Yutaka, 'Ajia taiheiyō sensō no senjō to heishi' '(*Battlefields and Soldiers in the Asia-Pacific War*)', in Kurasawa et al. (eds.), *Senjō no shosō*, p. 73.

11 Ibid., pp. 76–7.

12 Yoshida Yutaka and Mori Shigeki, *Ajia taiheiyō sensō* (*The Asia-Pacific War*) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2007), pp. 258–9, 261–3.

Various kinds of weapons were used for suicide missions besides aircraft, casualties of which were not included in the figure in the previous paragraph. *Kaiten*, a weapon developed by the navy, was a small submarine with explosives on its front. Approximately eighty Kaiten crews lost their lives during missions. The Navy also built *Ōka*, a rocket propelled glider with explosives, and *Shinyō*, a motorboat with explosives. The Navy used the battleship *Yamato*, with approximately 3,300 men on board, for a suicide mission at the Battle of Okinawa in April 1945. The mission failed, and the battleship sank to the bottom of the ocean, killing all but 276 of the crew. Similarly, the army built *Marure*, a suicide motorboat, and often utilised 'human bullets', soldiers with explosives, who were ordered to destroy tanks and other armed vehicles.[13]

During the last years of the empire's existence, civilians too suffered extreme violence in many different forms. The empire demanded that its people on the Japanese islands and colonies sacrifice their lives for the empire, if necessary. Okinawa, for example, became a battlefield in March 1945, and approximately a half of the 244,000 Japanese losses were civilians.[14] This is partly because the government mobilised the residents in Okinawa to defend not only the Okinawan islands, but also the Japanese mainland. Historians such as Hayashi Hirofumi consider the Battle of Okinawa itself a suicide mission meant to protect the emperor system and the Japanese mainland.[15] All able-bodied people, including children, ethnic minorities and women, were mobilised to prepare for the battle, building air bases, barracks and bunkers and transporting necessary equipment and materials. The army drafted some 22,000 men aged 17 to 45 to reinforce its undermanned units and mobilised male and female students and youth aged 14 and above into the youth, the medical and the transportation units. One third of the Japanese defence forces consisted of the Okinawan draftees and students. While many of the Okinawans perished in the American assaults, many others died from starvation, took their own lives, or died at the hands of the Japanese military.[16]

13 Ibid., pp. 260–3; Yamato mūjiamu (Yamato Museum), *Kure-shi kaiji rekishi kagakukan Yamato mūjiamu jōsetsutenji zuroku* (*Illustrated Records of the Permanent Exhibits of the Kure-City Maritime Museum of Science and History: Yamato Museum*) (Kure: Yamato Museum, 2005), p. 38.

14 Okinawa Prefectural Government, *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa* (Okinawa: Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), p. 1.

15 Hayashi Hirofumi, '"Shūdan jiketsu" mondai o kangaeru shiten' ('Examining the "Mass Suicide" Dispute'), *Kikan sensō sekinin kenkyū* (*Quarterly Journal of the Study of Japan's War Responsibility*) 60 (2008), 3.

16 Okinawa Prefectural Government, *Oral History*, pp. 1, 4.

As more than 2 million shells fell on the islands, the civilians and the defending forces retreated to southern Okinawa, taking shelter in natural underground caves. Two-thirds of the civilian deaths occurred after the retreat. The Army often drove out civilians who had been hiding in the caves without much food, and these wanderers consequently lost their lives in the bombardments. When the caves were shared between the army and the civilians, the army often prohibited the civilians from surrendering to the American troops and forced them to die with the servicemen. Compulsory mass suicides by the 'volunteers' frequently occurred during the battle, and the army provided grenades for them to kill themselves. In addition, the army often executed suspected Okinawan spies, including those who refused to give up their food or shelter, who attempted to surrender, who received food from the American troops, or who provided 'suspicious' responses to the army interrogators.[17]

Wartime education, aimed at creating imperial subjects (*kōminka*), justified the government's war efforts and provoked patriotism among the youth, such that many young Okinawans, like their counterparts in other regions, saw sacrificing themselves for the empire as ethical and just.[18] In addition, the wartime mass media demonised the American and British people.[19] It is not surprising that the young Japanese patriots chose to fight to the death rather than surrender as they often believed that the American enemy would torture Japanese men and boys to death and would rape and kill Japanese women and girls.[20] The trend of the times hardly allowed the youth to question patriotism imposed by the empire. The empire utilised various tools, including its judicial system, to control dissent. Treason was a serious crime, and unpatriotic Japanese had no place in the empire.[21]

This mobilisation of youth was not limited to Okinawa. It happened across the empire, and children were forced to work at unsafe places such as the poison gas factory on Ōkuno Island (built in 1929) in Hiroshima. Yoshimi

17 Hayashi Hirofumi, '"Shūdan jiketsu"', p. 3.

18 See, for example, the excerpt about the Pacific War in the 1943 history textbook in Takashi Yoshida, *The Making of the 'Rape of Nanking': History and Memory in Japan, China, and the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 3–4.

19 John Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1986), pp. 234–61.

20 Hayashi Hirofumi, '"Shūdan jiketsu"', p. 4.

21 In 1937, for example, the Japanese government arrested some 529 alleged leftists, among whom 210 were indicted for violations of the Peace Preservation Law of 1925, which made illegal any attempt to challenge the empire's national polity and allowed the state to employ capital punishment for those who violated the law. See Yoshida, *Making of the 'Rape of Nanking'*, p. 21.

Yoshiaki, professor of history at Chūō University, estimated that the imperial military produced a total of 73.8 million tons of toxic gas between 1931 and 1945, of which 66.2 million tons were made on the island.[22] Due to its strategic importance, the island was erased from the map during the war. At its peak, approximately 5,000 workers produced lethal gas at the factory.[23] From June 1943 to August 1945, more than 1,000 students aged between 13 and 16 were mobilised to work on the islands. Their duties included moulding ignition powder for the smoke canisters and rolling drums filled with lethal materials from the storehouse to the pier. These drums were often covered in remnants of the toxic liquids, but the children had little protection. Nearly 64 per cent of the former student and adult workers on the island experienced respiratory and digestive problems in the postwar period.[24]

In order to cope with the labour shortages and to propel war industries, the empire also mobilised residents of Japan's colonies and occupied territories. For example, one estimate concludes that, between 1939 and 1945, the Japanese government mobilised more than 6 million Koreans to propel Japan's war machine. Approximately 1.5 million of these Koreans were transported to Japan in order to work at mines, military factories, construction sites, and other places that required hard manual labour.[25] As for Chinese mobilised labourers, nearly 40,000 people in northern China were transported to Japan and forced to work in the 135 mines and other construction sites across Japan.[26] Their working conditions were generally harsh, and approximately 18 per cent of them died. In addition, the Japanese government transported thousands of Chinese 'special labourers' (*tokushu kōjin*), including suspected communist sympathisers and prisoners of war, to the mines in Manchuria as the region needed more than 1.1 million workers.[27]

22 Yoshimi Yoshiaki, 'Nihongun wa donokurai dokugasu o seisan shitaka' ('On the Gross Production of Chemical Agents by the Japanese Military'), *Kikan sensō sekinin kenkyū* 5 (autumn 1994), 4, 7.

23 Okada Reiko, *Ōkunoshima dōin gakuto no katari*, trans. Jean Inglis as *Okuno Island: The Story of the Student Brigade* (Hiroshima: Okada Reiko, 1989), p. 2.

24 Chūgoku shinbunsha, *Dokugasu no shima: Ōkunoshima akumu no kizuato* (*Poison Gas Island: Ōkuno Island: Scars of Nightmare*) (Hiroshima: Chūgoku shinbun, 1996), pp. 2, 22, 24, 27.

25 Pak Kyong-sik, *Zai-Nichi Chōsenjin, kyōseirenkō, minzoku mondai* (*Korean Residents in Japan, Forced Mobilisation, and Ethnic Relations*) (Tokyo: San'ichi shobō, 1992), p. 194.

26 Tanaka Hiroshi, Utsumi Aiko and Ishitobi Jin, *Shiryo Chūgokujin kyōsei renkō* (*Historical Documents: The Forced Mobilisation of the Chinese People*) (Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 1987), p. 727.

27 Sugihara Tōru, *Chūgokujin kyōsei renkō* (*The Forced Mobilisation of the Chinese People*) (Tokyo: Iwanami, 2002), pp. 31, 42–4.

Exploiting prisoners of war for work was not uncommon in the Japanese empire. In 1942, the army announced that it had captured more than 260,000 Allied servicemen after they surrendered to the empire. Between November 1942 and October 1943, the empire mobilised approximately 60,000 Allied prisoners of war in addition to tens of thousands of Asian labourers (*rōmusha*) in order to build the 260-mile Burma–Thailand Railway.[28] As the army did not allow its servicemen to be captured, its policy towards the Allied prisoners was hostile and often cruel. The Army forced these labourers to work more than ten hours a day in order to build the railway as fast as possible. It was no surprise that approximately 43,000 are estimated to have died during the construction because of exhaustion, malnutrition, disease and physical abuse.[29]

Many of the guards of the Allied prisoners were ethnic minorities. In 1942, the Army sent more than 3,000 Koreans and Taiwanese to the Allied prisoner of war camps in South-East Asia. The army tried to use these Allied prison camps as facilities to convince the imperial subjects that the empire was superior to the American and European powers. This is one example of how prevalent racist thoughts were during the war. A statement on 5 November 1941, by Hara Yoshimichi, president of the Privy Council, revealed his concern that Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor would unite 'the entire Aryan race' against Japan.[30] He, like many others of the period, understood international affairs from a perspective of race relations.

Racism

While Japanese servicemen suffered violence from the empire, they also perpetrated violence. Killing enemy servicemen in combat was considered honourable. Although killing civilians was not considered admirable even during the war, the distinction between combatants and non-combatants became blurred as the war with China and the Allies progressed. After the

28 Utsumi Aiko, Gavan McCormack and Hank Nelson, *Taimen tetsudō to Nihon no sensō sekinin: horyo to rōmusha to Chōsenjin* (*The Burma–Thailand Railway and Japan's War Responsibility: Prisoners of War, Labourers, and Koreans*) (Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 1994), pp. 13–14.

29 Ibid., pp. 120–4, 145. John Dower points out that 27 per cent of American and British prisoners of wars in the Pacific theatre died during their imprisonment. See John Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1986), p. 48.

30 Utsumi et al., *Taimen tetsudō to Nihon no sensō sekinin*, pp. 123–6, 146; Akira Iriye, *Pearl Harbor and the Coming of the Pacific War: A Brief History with Documents and Essays* (New York: Bedford/St Martins, 1999), p. 37.

war with China broke out near Beijing, the Japanese mass media often stressed the brutality of the Chinese forces and their killings of Japanese civilians. Many ordinary Japanese welcomed attacks on Chinese forces, as seen in news reports about the '100-man killing contest' between two second lieutenants who were trying to outdo each other in killing one hundred Chinese enemies while they advanced to Nanjing. When the Japanese forces captured Nanjing, the newspapers widely reported the annihilation of the enemy.[31] The nation celebrated the fall of Nanjing, instead of mourning the loss of the lives of the enemy nationals.

The Judgment of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (1946–8) estimated that more than 200,000 Chinese people were killed in and around Nanjing during the first six weeks of the Japanese occupation. The Tribunal, describing the atrocities in Nanjing, said:

> The Japanese soldiers swarmed over the city and committed various atrocities. According to one of the eyewitnesses they were let loose like a barbarian horde to desecrate the city. It was said by eyewitnesses that the city appeared to have fallen into the hands of the Japanese as captured prey, that it had not merely been taken in organized warfare, and that the members of the victorious Japanese Army had set upon the prize to commit unlimited violence. Individual soldiers and small groups of two or three roamed over the city murdering, raping, looting, and burning. There was no discipline whatever. Many soldiers were drunk. Soldiers went through the streets indiscriminately killing Chinese men, women, and children without apparent provocation or excuse until in places the streets and alleys were littered with the bodies of their victims. According to another witness, Chinese were hunted like rabbits, everyone seen to move was shot. At least 12,000 non-combatant Chinese men, women and children met their deaths in these indiscriminate killings.[32]

Tall and thick walls with blockaded exits protected the city of Nanjing, but many of the Chinese defending forces were trapped inside these same walls. The troops threw away their uniforms and attempted to hide in the refugee zone. The thorough mopping up operations by the Japanese military contributed to the number of victims.

In terms of scale and duration, the Japanese Army's strategy known as the Three-All campaigns (kill all, burn all and loot all) was greater than the atrocities in Nanjing. The campaigns were intended to annihilate Chinese

31 Yoshida, *Making of the 'Rape of Nanking'*, pp. 16, 82.

32 John Pritchard, *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial*, vol. xx (New York: Garland, 1981), 49,604–8.

communists and their sympathisers in northern China for three years from 1941. The Japanese North China Area Army (Kita-Shina hōmen gun) occupied more than 10 million hectares in northern China (including Hebei, Shandong, Shanxi, Chahar, Suiyuan and part of Henan) with a population of approximately 100 million people. In order to carry out the campaigns, the army mobilised at least 2 million labourers to dig 6 by 35 m trenches running 200 km from north to south or build walls if it was impossible to dig trenches. These trenches and walls were used to surround and isolate the enemy bases. After completely destroying the villages, the army sprayed mustard gas so that the enemy would not able to reuse them as bases. While the exact number of the deaths from the campaigns is unknown, one Chinese estimate concludes that nearly 2.5 million people were killed during these campaigns.[33]

As many of the Japanese perpetrators explained in the postwar period, they did not feel remorse when they killed Chinese enemies. Whether they were civilians or combatants, whether old or young, whether male or female, whether adults or children, these differentiations were not important to many of these perpetrators as they felt utter contempt for the Chinese people. For example, Tominaga Shōzō, a squadron leader who beheaded Chinese prisoners, ordered his squadron to machine gun a group of prisoners, and participated in burning a village of one hundred houses during the war, needed a lengthy and complex process to overcome his wartime hatred and disdain for the Chinese people. Yuasa Ken, an army surgeon who conducted human vivisections during the war, believed that 'the Koreans were despicable and that the Chinese were an inferior race'. These views helped him justify his atrocities during the war.[34]

After the war both Tominaga and Yuasa were captured and imprisoned by the Chinese communists. Tominaga spent six years in prison, while Yuasa spent five years. Contrary to their expectations, they received no retribution. The Chinese communists neither tortured nor executed them. Instead, they were treated humanely and received ample time to re-examine their wartime thoughts and deeds. They discussed their atrocities with their fellow inmates, confronted the Chinese survivors of the Japanese atrocities, and began to feel inexpiable guilt and responsibility for their war crimes. They recognised their victims not as faceless enemies but as other human beings and took

33 Fujiwara, *Tennō no guntai to Nit-Chū sensō*, pp. 109–16, 124.

34 Tominaga Shōzō, *Aru B/C kyū senpan no sengoshi* (*The Postwar History of a Class-B and Class-C War Criminal*) (Tokyo: Suiyōsha, 1977), pp. 44, 53–4; Yuasa Ken, *Kesenai kioku: Nihongun no seitai kaibō no kiroku* (*Indelible Memory: A Record of Human Vivisections by the Japanese Army*) (Tokyo: Nit-Chū shuppan, 1996), p. 230.

responsibility for their crimes instead of accusing the state, their superiors in the Army, or their education. Tominaga and Yuasa were not alone, and they established the Liaison Society for Returnees from China (Chūgoku kikansha renrakukai) after their repatriations. When they returned to Japan, they began to educate the public about the atrocities that they had committed through publications and oral presentations. They believed that their honest confessions would convey to young Japanese the reality of war, and their mission of atonement continued until their deaths.[35]

Racist ideology probably also inspired Japan's chemical and biological warfare. During the eight years of the war with China, according to the Chinese government's study, the Japanese military used both lethal and non-lethal chemical weapons approximately 2,000 times in more than nineteen provinces. These weapons killed and wounded more than 90,000 Chinese combatants and civilians. The Chinese government estimates that the Japanese military abandoned nearly 2 million gas canisters and shells in China. In addition to chemical warfare, the army also conducted biological warfare in China. The Army units such as Unit 731 and Unit 100 conducted vivisections, germ warfare and lethal experiments on people in China. Although it is unknown how many people were killed by Japan's biological warfare, Unit 731 alone took 3,000 human lives through its medical experiments.[36]

Opium and other drugs were systematically used to control the people in China, Korea, Mongolia and Singapore. In Mongolia, the Japanese government controlled the puppet regime and sold 714 tons of opium between 1939 and 1942, 55 per cent of which was exported to Shanghai and 24 per cent to northern China. The amount of opium was able to provide annual supplies for 500,000–800,000 people. In Manchuria, between 1933 and 1945 at least 3,410 tons were produced, while in Korea 293 tons were harvested between 1935 and 1944. In addition, the Japanese government imported Iranian opium to central China and Manchuria. After Imperial Japan conquered South-East Asia, the Japanese government initiated opium operations in Singapore.

35 Takashi Yoshida, *From Cultures of War to Cultures of Peace: War and Peace Museums in Japan, China, and South Korea* (Portland, ME: Merwin Asia, 2014), pp. 35–40.

36 Awaya Kentarō, Murata Tadayoshi and Fujiwara Akira, *Nihongun no kagakusen* (*Chemical Warfare by the Japanese Military*) (Tokyo: Ōtsuki shoten, 1996), p. vii; Awaya Kentarō, *Miketsu no sensō sekinin* (*Unresolved War Responsibility*) (Tokyo: Kashiwa shobō, 1994), p. 159; Yoshimi Yoshiaki and Ikō Shunya, 'Nihongun no saikinsen' ('Biological Warfare of the Japanese Military'), *Kikan sensō sekinin kenkyū* 2 (Winter 1993), 27; Sheldon Harris, *Factories of Death: Japanese Biological Warfare, 1932–45, and the American Cover-up* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 116.

According to Eguchi Keiichi, Professor of Modern Japanese History, Japan's opium operations in China had two goals: to profit from selling the drugs and to poison China into submission, because addiction would deprive the Chinese people of their will to fight. While the Japanese government functioned as the drug cartel, dealers were often colonial residents from China, Korea and Taiwan, many of whom struggled to survive at the bottom of the empire's social hierarchy.[37]

Although racism may not be the sole reason for such violence as the Nanjing Massacre, Three-All campaigns, chemical and biological warfare, and opium production and smuggling, the belief that the Japanese people were racially superior to colonial residents amplified violence by the state and the individuals in the empire. Similarly, the state and its residents frequently committed violence against women.

Sexism

From the beginning of the Meiji Period to Japan's defeat, according to Okuda Akiko, a scholar of women's history, men dominated all areas in politics, the economy and society, and led the nation to the Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War, the First World War and the Asia-Pacific War. In the eyes of Okuda, while women continued to challenge men's dominance, it was a period of restraint and subordination. While modern ideas were introduced to society in the Meiji period, the same feudal patriarchy continued to exist. The newly introduced civil code in 1898 legally empowered men, and legally incapacitated women and children. The law strictly limited women to the household, and wives had no right to inherit their husband's wealth. The law allowed men to sue their wives (and mistresses) for adultery, but wives (and mistresses) had no such right.[38]

During the empire's reign, the government tolerated prostitution and human trafficking.[39] From the early Meiji period, male traffickers purchased women, including girls as young as 13, from the heads of households and sold

37 Eguchi Keiichi, *Nit-Chū Ahen sensō* (*Japan's Opium War*) (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1988), pp. 203–8; Timothy Brook and Bob Wakabayashi, 'Introduction: Opium's History in China', in T. Brook and B. Wakabayashi (eds.), *Opium Regimes: China, Britain, and Japan, 1839–1952* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 15–19.

38 Okuda Akiko, 'Jo' ('Introduction'), in Okuda Akiko et al. (eds.), *Onna to otoko no jikū* (*The Time and Space of Gender: Redefining Japanese Women's History*), vol. v (Tokyo: Fujiwara shoten, 1995), pp. 16, 17–21, 23.

39 Fujiwara, *Tennō no guntai to Nit-Chū sensō*, p. 6.

them to the brothels in Japan, Asia, Europe and Americas for the purpose of sexual slavery.[40] The Meiji government licensed and taxed brothels, and the recruited women were controlled through debt bondage. The prostitution law was in effect in the Japanese colonies, but different standards applied to different regions: female prostitution with a minimum age of 18 was legal in Japanese homelands; the minimum age was 17 in Korea and 16 in Taiwan. While human rights activists attempted to criminalise prostitution, their efforts did not succeed. The empire supported the narrative that the prostitution law would benefit society and was essential for public hygiene and for the military.[41] Many of these women attempted to escape, died because of sexual diseases or committed suicide, but the government completely ignored their wishes.[42]

As the government embraced the idea that setting up brothels would serve the greater public good, it was inevitable that the military founded and sponsored the so-called comfort stations in Asia and the Pacific, including China, Hong Kong, French Indochina, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, British Borneo, the Dutch East Indies, Burma, Thailand, New Guinea, the Japanese Okinawan archipelago, the Bonin Islands, Hokkaidō, the Kurile Islands and Sakhalin. Yoshimi Yoshiaki, a professor of history who specialises in the study of the 'military's comfort women', concludes that the comfort stations existed along with the military stations where the Japanese troops were dispatched and that between 50,000 and 200,000 women were forced into sexual servitude during the Asia-Pacific War.[43] The military believed that these 'comfort stations' would prevent its servicemen from raping local women or contracting sexual diseases, maintain morale by providing sexual 'comfort' to the troops, and protect secret information by limiting its servicemen's contacts with outside people. Contrary to the military's expectation, the establishment of these stations failed to prevent assaults on local women by the military and the spread of sexual diseases among the servicemen. Nonetheless, the number of these stations continued to increase and spread across Asia.[44]

40 Morisaki Kazue, 'Sekushuaritī no rekishi' ('The History of Sexuality'), in Okuda Akiko et al. (ed.), *Onna to otoko no jikū*, vol. v, pp. 155–8.

41 Ibid., pp. 155–8, 165, 171.

42 For example, in Fukuoka (known as the 'prostitution kingdom'), between January and July 1927, among the some 2,000 women forced into prostitution, 16 women died and 171 attempted to escape. See ibid., pp. 155–8, 165, 171, 174.

43 Yoshiaki Yoshimi, *Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military during World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 91, 93.

44 Ibid., pp. 72, 74–5, 91, 93.

The victims of such sexual slavery included women of various nationalities and ethnicities, including Australians, Burmese, Chinese, Dutch, Filipinas, Koreans, Indonesians, Japanese, Singaporeans, Taiwanese and Vietnamese. Procurement of these women varied. Some of them were deceived or lured with the promise of a well-paid job, some were abducted, and others volunteered without knowing the realities of the services that they had to provide. In the case of Pak Yong-sim, born in 1921 in South Pyongan, when she was 17 a Japanese policeman promised her a well-paid job, but she was taken to a 'comfort station' in Nanjing and was coerced into providing sex to the Japanese soldiers. Three years later, she was transferred to Burma and then sent to the war front. The Japanese troops were annihilated except a few soldiers, but she and two other women escaped the battlefield and were rescued by the Chinese troops. She was pregnant and experienced heavy bleeding. A Chinese doctor gave her a Caesarean section, but discovered that her child was dead. She lost not only her child, but also her uterus. In the 1950s, she was married, and adopted a child. For nearly fifty years she kept her wartime experience secret from her son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren. In 1993, inspired by other women who had similar experiences, she decided to share her haunting experience with the public. Understandably, she could not forgive the empire or forget what it had done to her.[45]

After Japan's defeat, the empire's attitude towards women remained unchanged until the promulgation of the new Constitution in 1947, which guaranteed women's civil rights. During the Allied Occupation, the Japanese government established the Recreation and Amusement Association (RAA) and opened the same kind of 'comfort stations' for the Allied troops. The government believed that these stations would save women and girls from being raped by the Allied troops, and disregarded the fact that the RAA employees had to sacrifice their bodies for the state. The Association originally planned to mobilise 5,000 women. The government intended to enlist primarily geisha, licensed and unlicensed prostitutes, waitresses, barmaids and habitual offenders under the prostitution law.[46] In reality, however, non-professional women, including high school students who lost their families

45 Ibid., p. 94; Yuki Tanaka, *Japan's Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution during World War II and the US Occupation* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 44–50; Nishino Rumiko, *Senjō no 'ianfu': Ramō zenmetsusen o ikinobita Paku Yonshimu no kiseki* ('*Comfort Women' in the Battlefield: The Life of Pak Yong-sim, Who Survived the Annihilating Battle of Lameng*) (Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 2003), pp. 18–80, 201–21.

46 Yoshiaki Yoshimi, *Comfort Women*, pp. 180–1.

due to the bombings, were recruited. The Association put up a large poster in front of its office in Tokyo to recruit the women:

> Announcement to New Japanese Women! We require the utmost co-operation of new Japanese women who participate in a great project to comfort the occupation forces, which is part of the national emergency establishment of the postwar management. Female workers, between 18 and 25 years old, are wanted. Accommodation, clothes and meals, all free.[47]

To lure as many patriotic women as possible, the advertisement stressed that the job was urgent and important to the nation.

RAA succeeded in enlisting 1,360 women. An estimate suggests that those women had to provide sex to between fifteen and sixty Allied servicemen a day. Whether these stations did prevent the Allied servicemen from raping women is unknown, but Allied soldiers frequently perpetrated violence against women even after the establishment of these stations. For example, seven drunken former Australian POWs confined three women to a room and gang raped them, apparently for retaliation. Some members of the American military police took advantage of their rank and raped Japanese women. In addition, contrary to expectation, sexual diseases among the Allied servicemen increased. Soon after the Occupation, venereal diseases became the most urgent health issue for the Allied troops. Nearly half of the US Navy and Marine troops in Yokosuka were suffering from such diseases in 1946. By then, the Occupation forces had prohibited their servicemen from visiting public or private brothels, and RAA closed its facilities.[48]

The RAA facilities were short-lived. Nonetheless, the Japanese government declared that women had the right to become prostitutes and continued to disregard the women who were exploited by the Allied servicemen allegedly to protect a greater number of girls and women from sexual violence. Prostitution play, in which a boy imitated an Allied serviceman while a girl pretended to be a prostitute, became a popular activity among the children in occupied Japan. 'You like to meet my sister' became as popular as 'give me chocolate' to many orphans who collected some money by introducing their women to the servicemen. These prostitutes included girls as young as 14 years old.[49] Although the empire collapsed, its attitude towards

47 Quoted in Yuki Tanaka, *Japan's Comfort Women*, p. 146.

48 Yoshiaki Yoshimi, *Comfort Women*, p. 181; John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Aftermath of World War II* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), p. 129; Yuki Tanaka, *Japan's Comfort Women*, pp. 127, 149, 155, 162–3.

49 Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, p. 112.

less privileged citizens remained no different. Even after the war ended, the government consistently justified abuses in the name of national emergency.

Conclusion

As discussed above, much of the violence that the Japanese empire inflicted was associated with imperialism, militarism, racism and sexism. These ideologies, fuelled by the social and political contexts of the time, led the empire to become the perpetrator of atrocities and war crimes. Victims of such violence were not limited to non-Japanese, but included a wide variety of nationalities and ethnicities as well as both sexes. In many cases, however, this fact is dismissed as if the empire's mass violence had been aimed exclusively at its colonial subjects and foreign nationals. From the birth of the empire in 1868 until the birth of the new Constitution in 1947, imperialism and militarism were unleashed. They tended to be galvanised by racism and sexism, and mobilised in the name of national interests.

The same society that waged aggressive wars and brought destruction in Asia and the Pacific has embraced pacifism since the end of the empire. Defeat and despair obliterated the cultures of war, and a new Japan outlawed any aggressive war under Article Nine of the Constitution. Nationalism certainly survived in the new nation, but society has been able to contain it successfully. Japan's case demonstrates that any society can perpetrate mass violence and that imperialism, militarism, racism and sexism provoke this violence.

Bibliographical Essay

Studies of violence and the Japanese empire are rich in Japan. Particularly since the early 1980s too many monographs to be listed have tackled this topic, inspired by the dispute over the textbook description of Japan's wartime aggression. These studies examine such topics as the Nanjing Massacre, Japan's chemical and biological warfare, slave labour of Chinese and Koreans in Japan, Japanese colonial exploitations in East and South Asia, mistreatment of Allied prisoners of war, violence against women, and indiscriminate bombing of cities. Takashi Yoshida's 'Historiography of the Asia-Pacific War in Japan', *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence*, published in June 2008 (www.massviolence.org/Historiography-of-the-Asia-Pacific-War-in-Japan) summarises the study of Japan's war crimes in Japan. For those who are able to read Japanese, *Kikan sensô sekinin kenkyû* [Study on Japan's War Responsibility], currently published twice a year, gives up-to-date scholarly articles on violence and the Japanese empire. Scholars in Japan continue to discover new materials that enable us to expand our knowledge on the topic.

While a few books on violence and the Japanese empire were published in English, such as Ienaga Saburô's *The Pacific War, 1931–45* (New York: Pantheon, 1978) prior to the 1980s, studies in English language on this topic has been growing since the mid 1990s. Sheldon Harris's *Factories of Death: Japanese Biological Warfare, 1932–45, and the American Cover-Up* (New York: Routledge, 1994) examines Japan's biological warfare during the war, and is primarily based on English-language sources such as the American archival documents at the National Archives. Brian Victoria analysed the role of the Sôtô school of Buddhism during the war and its priests' war responsibility in his *Zen at War* (New York: Whetherhill, 1997). Joshua Fogel edited the first scholarly book on the study of the Nanjing Massacre in history and historiography: *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). Suzanne O'Brien translated Yoshimi Yoshiaki's *Jûgun ianfu*, which was published as *Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military during World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002). In 2007, Bob Wakabayashi published *The Nanking Atrocity, 1937–38: Complicating the Picture* (New York: Berghahn, 2007), providing scholarship on what happened in Nanjing and challenging the problematic narrative set forth in Iris Chang's best-selling *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

Despite the fact that the publications on Japan's war crimes and atrocities have been growing, far more scholarly books have been published on World War II and memory in postwar Japan. They include Lisa Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); James Orr, *The Victim as Hero: Ideologies of Peace and National Identity in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001); T. Fujitani, G. White and L. Yoneyama, *Perilous Memories: The Asia Pacific War(s)* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001); Takashi Yoshida's *The Making of the 'Rape of Nanking': History and Memory in Japan, China, and the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Carol Gluck, 'Operations of Memory: "Comfort Women" and the World', in S. Miyoshi and R. Mitter (eds.), *Ruptured Histories: War, Memory, and the Post-Cold War in Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 47–77; and Franziska Seraphim's *War Memory and Social Politics in Japan, 1945–2005* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007).

Compared with scholarly accounts, non-scholarly accounts and websites on violence and the Japanese empire are already abundant and widely available. These non-scholarly accounts, whether written in Chinese, English, Japanese or Korean, tend to provide simple dichotomous narratives between good and evil. While the scholarly books listed above certainly have strengths and weaknesses, many of these books try to go beyond this nation-state oriented analysis.